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SUNSET SERMONS

WILLIAM YOUNG FULLERTON, a native of Belfast, Ireland, first gave himself to business, but graduated from Spurgeon's College in 1879, and for fifteen years was associated with Spurgeon as an evangelist. For eighteen years he was pastor of the Melbourne Hall Church, Leicester. During the next fifteen years he served as Home Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, in London; and at present (1929) is Consultant Secretary of that Society. In 1917 he was President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland. He has traveled widely, and has been a speaker at international and world conventions, such as the World's Sunday School Convention in 1927, and the Baptist World Congress in Philadelphia, 1911, and in Toronto, 1928. He is a trustee of the Keswick Convention.

Among the products of his pen are: A Biography of C. H. Spurgeon, "At the Sixtieth Milestone," "The Christ of the Congo River," "The Legacy of Bunyan," "Souls of Men," "Life's Dusty Way," "God's High Way," "The Practice of the Presence of Christ."

SUNSET SERMONS

By W. Y. FULLERTON, D. D.

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INTRODUCTION

IN the Sunset we often become increasingly conscious of the glory of the passing day. When the blue and gray blush into the crimson we praise the sun more than at high noon. And if we are fortunate enough, with a cloudless horizon, to see the sun set in the sea and catch the flash of brilliant emerald with which it bids farewell, sunset gains a new delight.

Then there comes the Afterglow, the sun repenting his departure, the dead sky rising to life again, the citron changing to rose, the clouds transfigured, the hills afire, the day ending in splendor, and the beauty of the Lord upon us, even if only for a little space. It is one of the extra things of life, doubly beautiful because it is added to the day.

After that the Gloaming, neither night nor day; when the gentle breeze wraps us round, and as the flowers shut, our hearts open; we walk and we whisper, and as we lose sight of each other's faces, we see into each other's souls, and say what in the day we would almost be afraid to think. It was in the gloaming in the garden that the first man heard the first message of redemption, and it was in the gloaming in the city that Christ healed all that had need of healing.

Last of all, and not often, comes the Aurora. Far north or far south it dulls the stars, shining steadily

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in its pure whiteness as it is reflected from the ice beyond, assuring us that the sun is somewhere bright and that it will surely return.

Though *Sunset Sermons* have not the brilliance of the beginning of the day, perhaps they may have something of the blaze and the glow, the magic and the wonder, that come to us at its close.

They are sermons, not essays; preached, not written. They have been spoken without notes at different periods, some on both sides of the Atlantic; some only once, some oftener; and they still bear the marks of their original utterance. From many others they have been selected toward the sunset of a long career to set forth those aspects of the life of the spirit that appeal more in the leisure of the evening than in the pressure of the day. Behind them there lies a real experience, and, especially in some cases, a memorable response.

It will be noticed that there is a sequence in the topics. The first six sermons seek to lead the soul to an appreciation of God as he may be known in Christian life. The second six expound aspects of the Christian faith as set forth in the central chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. The remaining eight endeavor to bring the whole to a practical issue in godly living, and end on a universal note that is almost human enough to be divine.

So He giveth His beloved sleep, or grants to them songs in the night.

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I

A FAITHFUL CREATOR

Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.—*1 Peter 4: 19.*

Our subject, therefore, is not the suffering of those who deliberately sin—they receive the reward of their deeds—it is the more perplexing subject of those who seem to live righteously and yet suffer; and as far as my observation goes there never was a time when there were so many suffering hearts as now. The memory of our losses, the dear ones that left our homes never to return, the sorrows that are round about us because of the perplexities of the hour, the difficulties of choosing our path in the Christian life, the controversies within the church of God, all of these perplex our hearts and cause us in many cases deep anguish. Therefore, I am persuaded that this word will miss very few of us, and if today you are not conscious of suffering, you may be quite sure that before long you will be called, as all God's people are called, to endure some sorrow, for

> The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
> Leads to the place where sorrow is unknown.

It is possible, then, to do the will of God and yet suffer. That runs clean contrary to the thought of salvation which some of us have indulged, as if to come to Christ were the end of all our sorrows. That

is not true; that cannot be true; God never meant it to be true. It is quite true that when you yield yourself utterly to Jesus Christ you will be delivered from many of the perplexities of life and many of its griefs, the griefs that come from your self-choosing and your wilfulness; but it is equally true that being whole-hearted for God in a world that does not know him will bring you new sorrows and new perplexities. When I began to seek to live the Christian life it was a question with me many a time whether Christ, when he suffered, suffered in order to set me wholly free, or whether he suffered in order to show me the way that I too was to suffer; whether he bore the cross that I might escape it, or whether he bore the cross to teach me the way. Of course, Christ did that for us which we could not do for ourselves; he settled the question of sin in a way that was impossible to flesh and blood, but he also gave us an example that we should follow in his steps; and that God of Grace who calls us to glory calls us to glory only after we have suffered awhile.

God does much for us by an act of faith in delivering us from evil, but I am quite sure that there are things that God himself cannot do unless he allows us to suffer. Your suffering may be great, it may be little; it may seem paltry to other people although it may be just the most acute thing to you, as their suffering may appear in the same way to them; but God, while he accepts our faith and gives us his peace, has such high designs for each one of us that he disciplines us, and it is only by the suffering of this present time that he is going to lead us to his glory.

So it comes to pass that not only may we do the will of God and suffer, but it actually is the will of God that we should suffer. The problem of the Book of Job is that the righteous suffer not only by accident, but they suffer by God's purpose; he delivers them to suffer that through them he may give witness to the world that their faith is real. And their life, beautiful by his grace, becomes more beautiful by his chastisement; "though no chastisement for the present seemeth to be joyous but rather grievous, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." It does not yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness unless you are exercised by it. It was one of the hymns of the Early Church, "If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him." You can hear the chorus of those early Christians rising as they sing it:

> Well! to suffer is divine,
> Pass the watchword down the line,
> Pass the countersign "Endure."
> Not to him who rashly dares,
> But to him who nobly bears,
> Is the victor's garland sure.

What then shall we do when we suffer and cannot write it down that our suffering is the direct result of our sin, or selfishness, or wilfulness?

I. We Must Get Back to the Ultimate

The apostle here tells us that we are to commit ourselves to the faithful Creator. It is a very significant and remarkable thing that he who knew

Jesus, who followed Jesus, does not speak of God as Redeemer or Saviour but as Creator. There must be a deep reason for it, and quite evidently it is that he wishes to get past all second causes to the ultimate, back to the place beyond which nothing other can be, and there find rest. This does not negative the thought of the Redeemer, it strengthens it. God who formed us also redeemed us, redeemed us because he created us, created us in order to redeem.

You must then get back, past everything else, past the church, past the Bible, past the Cross, to the Creator. You can say to yourself, "I am, therefore God is." All your suffering cannot rob you of yourself, and your existence proves God's existence: the effect must have an adequate cause. Then say, "I can think, therefore God can think." It is impossible to imagine thought coming from no-thought. You can go further. "I can love, therefore God can love." Our Lord Jesus gave us warrant for that: he told us to argue from our own heart to God's. "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit," the best of all good gifts, "to them that ask him." I am, therefore God is. I can think, therefore God can think. I can love, therefore God can love; and I can suffer, therefore God can suffer. He is love, and love suffers long and is kind. Knowing him, I too must learn how to suffer and yet be kind. So I get back to the Ultimate and rest there.

But how shall I think of the Creator? I must get back to the ultimate of the Ultimate. This text came to me with overwhelming force one Sunday evening

as I was crossing the Tasman Sea, that bit of the ocean that lies between New Zealand and Australia. I was aft on the ship and seeking to rise to God.

Looking at the great waves which tossed the boat whither they would, there was such a sense of power in it that involuntarily I exclaimed, "How mighty God is!" But it will not give me peace merely to commit myself to his power: he is strong to smite as well as strong to save.

Then the sun set, and the moon rose, making a path of mercury over the waters: and the stars shone, the Southern Cross among them, and I said, "How beautiful God is." But it takes more than beauty to heal a broken heart.

Then I saw the birds that followed the ship: the albatross, more wonderful even than the eagle; sometimes with spread of pinions fifteen feet across, circling round the ship which at its swiftest went all too slowly for the flight of the bird. Never moving its wings, only inclining them to the wind; never resting, there late at night, there early in the morning, sleeping and feeding nobody knows when. And I said, "How skilful God is!" But human anguish needs more than skill for its appeasement.

The mighty God is not great enough, the beautiful God not compassionate enough, the skilful God not sure enough. Peter has the right adjective—"a *faithful* Creator!" In his faithfulness the crushed heart can be comforted, the bitterest sorrow assuaged. The text was like balm to my spirit, and shone with a beauty I had never known before. In all the changeableness of earthly things, He abideth

faithful, with him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

From this there follow three things: *He will be faithful to himself.* He never can be other than he is. "I am the Lord," he says, "I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Because he is faithful to himself, you may depend on him. Sometimes people tell you you can only trust God when you have got a promise. Thank God for all the great and exceeding precious promises that cause us to hope, and we can take God at his Word: if he says a thing he means it. But when you get to know God, you can trust him even without a promise. A friend of mine invites me to stay with him and says, "If you come I will give you a good time," and some of my friends are kind enough to do that. He makes me a promise, and I know he will give me a good time because he said so. Another man invites me to stay with him and promises me nothing, but I know *him,* and I know he will give me a good time because I know he could not do anything else; he will be faithful to himself. When you get to know God as the faithful Creator, then even if you have no promise, even if you cannot fasten on any Scripture, yet you know God will be faithful—faithful to himself always. Have you gripped that?

Then *he will be faithful to men as men.* He made us, and not we ourselves. When God made men he made them with the certainty of suffering and the possibility of sinning. If man had not sinned, still God's purpose would have been fulfilled, man would have reached more easily to the place that God had

prepared for him; but God, when he made man and gave him freedom, knew that he might sin.

And when man sinned, God was not taken by surprise; God did not need hurriedly to invent a remedy, God had provided the remedy before the need for it arose. God was not only the Creator, the God who made us, but from all eternity he was the Saviour who had provided for our sin, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." And he had provided for our sorrow too, for he, from all eternity, was the Comforter. You are driven up to the doctrine of the Trinity by your own need—Creator, Saviour, Comforter. And God is faithful to the men he has made, and he will see us through. He can do it.

Further than that, *God will be faithful to me—that is, to you;* I suppose every one of us here thinks himself different from everybody else, and every one is quite right. As a boy I used to think I was the odd one, and I have scarcely altered my opinion since. Each of us is different from everybody else. Well, God knows all the idiosyncrasies of your nature and all the difficulties of your lot, and he can meet them. God does not hold out to his children a sort of "Heal-all," the same for everybody. He has different comfort for different sorrows, and he is faithful; and when I feel myself to be singularly placed, and when I realize my lot is different from others, and when I can get no comfort from observing them, and when their witness does not meet my need, I yet can say, "God is the faithful Creator, and I can go back to him!"

If your watch goes wrong you do not take it to the grocer, you take it to the watchmaker; you take it to the man who understands it; and when things go wrong with me I go to the Creator, I go to God who made me. The God who made you is the God who redeems you, the God who comforts you, the God who does everything for you. He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end. And he is the end because he is the beginning. So Peter was not wrong, the word he has chosen is right. We commit ourselves unto the faithful Creator; we rest upon his faithfulness.

II. It Follows from Our Trust in God's Faithfulness that We Commit Our Souls Unto Him

That will not happen by itself, or by accident. We are to commit our souls to the Creator, the Redeemer, the Saviour, the Comforter, just as our Lord committed himself to his Father. In that earlier chapter in Peter we read (2:23): "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." He handed the whole case over to the righteous judge, and you and I commit our souls to the faithful Creator in the same way.

I remember a simple story about a Scottish boy, the idiot of the village. A new parson came to the village, and he went round talking to the people and catechizing the children. As he came to Jamie, he thought he would have to say something very simple, so he said, "Jamie, my lad, I suppose you know you have a soul?" And Jamie looked up vacantly and

said, " Nae, Jamie's got nae soul." And at length the lad gave the minister the clue: " Nae, Jamie's got nae soul, Jamie's gaen his soul to the Lord Jesus." Well, that will be the highest wisdom for us all. We commit the saving of our soul to him, and the keeping of our soul. We commit it to him because we can neither save it nor keep it ourselves. To begin with we cannot find it, for there is " the unconscious self " which eludes us, that part of our nature which sometimes in our dreams gives hints of its existence. But he who made us made the subliminal part of our being as well as that of which we have more perfect knowledge, and he can save and keep the whole. Even if you seem in your sorrow to be so bereft that you have nothing but your soul left, it will be an acceptable offering in his sight, and you may in triumph join Paul in his assurance, " I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

You may even rejoice that he who knows you altogether trusts you with your suffering, and when you realize that you yourself are also in his hand your suffering will be bearable. Like the Prince of Orange in the old Dutch days you will be like a stedfast rock in the midst of the restless ocean, taking his motto, " Tranquil amid the howling tempest."

III. Then You Will Be Able to Cooperate with God

In some sense you will be a creator yourself. Once looking at a sunset a boy exclaimed to his mother, " I wish I could help God to paint the sky," and his

mother caught him to her heart and said, "My boy, you are doing it. You make my sky much brighter with your love and your joy." If you are tempted to say that the committal of the soul to God is a passive religion that does not make a strong appeal to your active mind, look again, and you will see that this is the way to well-doing. Free from your own care, no longer absorbed with your own suffering, confident about your own welfare, you can now think of other people, and give the strength of your purpose to those around you, and in well-doing you will find it easier to continue to commit the keeping of your soul to the faithful Creator.

You yourself will become faithful, for the worshiper always becomes like the God he worships. You will not be "a busybody in other men's matters," a vice against which Peter warns us, but you will always be ready to say the kind word when there is opportunity, to do the helpful deed, to help lame dogs over stiles. You will be like the Master who "went about doing good," which does not only mean that he did good as he went about, but that he went about to do it, even put himself about to do it.

Outside Edinburgh there is the grave of a girl on which her schoolfellows have put the inscription: "When she was with us, it was easier to be good," an epitaph any of us might covet. That is the highest form of well-doing. Some friends of mine are themselves tremendously good, but when they are with us they make it harder for the rest of us to be good. If they would only commit their own woes to the Lord, and anoint their faces when they are

fasting, they would not only do well, but they would do better.

At length there will come to us all the day of the great committal. As we pass over we shall like our Lord be able to say, "Into thy hand I commend my spirit." It will be easier then if we get accustomed to it now.

Lately I have been to two funerals, each the funeral of a notable saint, and in each case was sung the favorite hymn of the man who had died. The hymn they each treasured in life is a very beautiful hymn for any man to sing about himself, but not so beautiful for others to sing about him:

> Safe home, safe home in port,
> Rent cordage, shattered deck,
> Torn sail, provision short,
> And only not a wreck.
> But, O the joy upon the shore
> To tell the voyage perils o'er!

Is that the way you are going into glory? "Rent cordage, shattered deck, torn sail, provision short, and only not a wreck!" Please God, I am not going that way. No, Peter in the first chapter of his second Epistle tells you that if you will add courage to your faith and all the rest of them, then "Entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour," that is an entrance under full sail. You will not even shorten sail as you get near the port, there will be a hand on the helm that will guide you straight, and you will sail royally into the harbor. That is sure if you will but commit yourself to the faithful Creator who

made the sea, and who manages the winds, and who can conquer all the evil without you, and the difficulties of your time and the temptations of the devil, and bring you in in triumph at last to his kingdom.

Then, the suffering over, the faithful Creator who is also your Redeemer and Friend will say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" But those words lightly spoken do not convey what our Lord really meant. "Well done!" two words. What Christ said had only two letters, and the saying of the words as if we only half meant them, without emphasis or thrill, does not give a hint of their wealth of meaning. It is as if our Lord was sitting on the throne of glory, and he sees you coming; you who have trusted yourself to him in life, who have made the great committal of yourself into his hand, you who have rested on his faithfulness, you who have sought in well doing to glorify him; he sees you coming, after life's labors and sorrows and patience; he sees you coming, and he is not content to wait till you reach his throne; he rises from the throne, he goes forward to meet you, and he says: "Bravo! Good and faithful servant. Bravo! enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

And to have Jesus Christ say "Bravo" to us would be worth living ten lives, worth dying ten deaths. "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him, as unto a faithful Creator."

II

THE MAGNIFICENT DELIVERER

Great deliverance giveth he to his king.—*Psalm 18: 50.*

Some years ago, when in Algiers, I turned from the main road to the left, and climbing the hill under overhanging houses and amidst pungent smells, reached the Casbah, the native Arab quarter. Presently I came to the place whither I was bound: on one side a mosque, with a boy asleep on the marble steps, and on the other side a door, at which I knocked. When it opened I was ushered into a courtyard where were all sorts of tropical plants, on the side a veranda with curiosities from the Sahara and elsewhere, and, beyond, the reception-room. This was the house of some Christian ladies, who, for the love of Christ, have borne a witness there under many difficulties and amid many dangers, with a decree of expulsion hanging over their heads liable to be executed at twenty-four hours' notice. The courage with which they had endured their difficulties and done their work is exemplified by the motto which they had put up at the end of their reception-room. As it was in a French colony it was in the French language, and if you will permit me I will give it to you as I read it on that day: *C'est lui qui délivre magnifiquement*—"It is he that delivers magnificently." It is in effect the last verse of the Eight-

eenth Psalm. We have it in our version, "Great deliverance giveth he to his king." That is the translation of the Hebrew Scripture. But, as you know, there was the Greek Scripture as well. Our Lord often used it, the apostle Paul nearly always, and the translation of the Greek Scripture, in Osterwald's fine Gallic flow, is quite properly, "It is he that delivers magnificently."

In this hour of supreme stress I can find nothing better to say than to remind you not only that he delivers, but that when he delivers he delivers in a way worthy of a God.

I. This Is True in the Realm of History

All along their history the redeemed people of Israel looked back to the deliverance from Egypt as the norm and pattern of what God could do for them. It was a magnificent deliverance. It came at the specific moment when it was promised. "At the end of the four hundred and thirty years, *even the self-same day,* it came to pass that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:41 and 51). God is never late. And when it came it was complete. "Against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue" (Exodus 11:7). They went through the Red Sea, "and the waters returned, and covered all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them: there remained not so much as one of them" (Exodus 14:28). "They sank into the bottom as a stone" (Exodus 15:5). "They sank like lead in the mighty waters" (Exodus 15:10). And turning to Psalm

105: 37 we read that when the people of God were delivered "There was not one feeble person among all their tribes." Was not that a magnificent deliverance?

So right through the Scriptures, if we had time to tarry, it would be delightful to trace it. Whenever the people were in supreme difficulty, and called upon God, he not only delivered them, but he delivered them magnificently. When Jerusalem was surrounded by armies he slew their foes in answer to their prayers. Hezekiah prayed, and the Lord gave swift answer—

> The angel of death spread his wings on the blast,
> And breathed on the face of the foe as he passed,
> And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
> And their hearts but once heaved and for ever were still.

When Daniel was in the lions' den, the king after an unquiet night came in the morning with the inquiry: "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God in whom thou trustest able to deliver thee?" and Daniel replied that it was even so. Spurgeon once said that one reason why the lions did not eat Daniel was because he had so much grit in him.

The three Hebrew children, when threatened with the fire, bravely said, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us, and he will deliver us," and then rising to a braver height they exclaimed, "but if not, be it known unto thee, O king, we will not serve thy gods." And you remember that the Lord brought them out with not even the smell of fire on their garments. It is he that delivers magnificently!

Passing rapidly on, we recall the story of Peter in prison, and as the church at Jerusalem prayed for him, the angel of God smote him in his sleep, and told him to put on his shoes—not even an old shoe was to be left behind. Then bringing him to the outer gate, it opened of its own accord, and as he made his way to the familiar meeting-place, he said, "Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel and hath delivered me." It was such a deliverance as the church scarcely believed possible, but there he stood, and each repetition of the knock at the door said, in effect, "It is he that delivers magnificently!"

Between the Old and New Testaments, the Lord was still active. Judas Maccabeus raised his standard against the oppressors and inscribing upon it "Let the Lord arise and let his enemies be scattered," he marched triumphantly into Jerusalem and cleansed the Temple where the impious Antiochus had offered a pig on the altar. And our Lord put honor on the deed, for we read in John 10: 22, "It was at Jerusalem the feast of the Dedication, and it was winter, and Jesus walked in Solomon's porch"; he remembered the day, and we may be sure he did not forget his servant. "It is he that delivers magnificently."

This is true beyond the bounds of Israel. The British nation has had in its history as real a deliverance as Israel from Egypt. We can never forget the day when Spain, after years of preparation, fitted out her mighty galleons and came against us, and we had no power against them. If you go down

to Plymouth on the Hoe you will see the statue of Sir Francis Drake, but his name is not on the front of it. With fine insight they have put something else there, something about our Lord: "He blew with his winds, and they were scattered." From our southern shores to the Shetland Island the mighty ships were driven on the rocks by the tempest:

And the fleet of the foemen of England found not one, but a thousand graves;
And he that would number and name them, must number by name and by tale the waves.

Many a time has God delivered us since. There was once a battle fought in the Midlands, the battle of Naseby, since when our liberties have been secure in these islands. The general of the day, none other than the mighty Oliver Cromwell, wrote this to the Speaker of the House of Commons, in a strain that I wish were oftener sounded in our public affairs to-day; thank God, it is not absent: "Sir, this is none other than the hand of God. To him alone belongs the glory, which none are to share with him. The general served with faithfulness and honor, and the best commendation I can give him is that I dare say he attributes it all to God, and would rather perish than attribute it to himself."

It has ever been thus, not only in Britain but in America. As a competent historian of the country has phrased it, "God sifted three kingdoms that he might send choice spirits to people the Western Continent."

II. In the Realm of Redemption

Here too, we can say, "It is he that delivers magnificently." The longer we think of the Cross of Christ, the more the wonder grows. That the Prince of Life should die; that the Just God should be able to justify sinners; that in time there should be such manifestation of a love that existed from Eternity; that God should not only grant forgiveness of sin, but give us absolute release—it is all beyond human imagining. It baffles our deepest thinking, and every expression in words falls short of the magnificent reality. We are bought with a price, and the price is greater than our minds can compass.

As a great master of theology once wrote, "You cannot dwell too much on the death and resurrection of Christ as the revelation of God's immortal love, so long as you do not hide the fact that they are powers and not mere lessons, and that they make together one crucial, final act of Divine majesty and mercy." Added to these words of Doctor Forsyth we can only repeat the words of the Psalmist, "It is he that delivers magnificently."

III. In the Realm of Experience

What is true of the nation may be true of everybody in the nation. The Eighteenth Psalm is a most wonderful psalm of deliverance. It is worth our reading through.

It begins with the prayer of a man who sought God's help, and the whole creation was moved to give the answer. "In my distress I called upon the Lord;

and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even unto his ears." Then comes the finest description of a thunder-storm in the Bible, and the poor man was delivered. "He delivered me from my strong enemy" (17); "He delivered me because he delighted in me" (19); "Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people" (43); "He delivered me from mine enemies" (48); "Thou hast delivered me from the violent man" (48); and finally, "It is he that delivers magnificently" (50). Indeed every verse of the psalm pulsates with his delivering grace and power.

Be pleased not to forget the superscription—one of the quaintest and most delightful things in the Bible: "A psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said."

Now if you had asserted that you were delivered from the hand of all your enemies, you would not need to add "Saul" afterwards, because certainly there would be none left when you are delivered from them all. But here was the most insistent and implacable enemy of David, though one whom he had treated with great forbearance, and when David said he was delivered from all his enemies, he felt, if only to reassure himself, he must add, "and from the hand of Saul." You have your own particular foe—your Saul—and God can deliver you from that as well as give general deliverance.

Listen to the testimony of a saint of olden time. "Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling" (Ps. 116:8). Is not that a magnificent deliverance? Yes, you answer, but it is in the Old Testament. Well, take a testimony from the New Testament: "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us." Is not that magnificent, too? McCheyne, once in visiting a dying man, entered his room quietly, and standing by the bedside, said, "He hath delivered, he doth deliver, he will deliver," and as quietly withdrew. It was a great pastoral visit. We add our Amen. He delivers us and delivers magnificently.

There are some of you who have made up your mind that God can deliver you from every sin, but the sin that doth so easily beset you. You have almost come to believe that you will drag that chain till your dying day. But he can set you free; even as you read these words the mighty work may be done.

He can deliver us from our care. There are a great many burdened people with round shoulders and bent backs—they think they cannot stand upright beneath their load. There will be no honor to God, nor credit to you, if you lift yourself up when the trouble is over. The great thing is to stand upright now, to confront your cares with a courageous heart, in the belief that God can deliver you magnificently.

He can deliver you from your circumstances.

> We are not driftwood on the wave,
> But like the ships that tempests brave.

You know that provided the sails are set right and the helm in a skilful hand, the ship need not be driven either by wind or current. It can conquer both. So can you. So can I. We are not driftwood on the wave, but like the ships that tempests brave.

There was a saint in the olden time who said something like this: "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord, and he heard, and delivered me from"—can you finish it? It is more wonderful perhaps than you have hitherto imagined—"from all my fears." I remember how I laughed the day I discovered that for the saint there is nothing in the universe to fear, nothing in the unknown more than in the known, nothing in the seen more than in the unseen, nothing in the future more than in the present—nothing anywhere.

Now I am going to say a thing that you will not believe, and yet it is true. God is so magnificent in his deliverance that he can deliver you from your nerves. I knew you would not believe that. But he can. Some of God's choicest saints are invalids, but I venture to say that some of us would not be such invalids if we would trust the Lord a little more. He can enable us to triumph over those impalpable things that no human power can touch.

But though he delivers magnificently, he cannot always deliver immediately. Sometimes he has to wait. We can understand the greatness of the epic he is writing by the time he takes to write it. We have seen some of the glorious chapters already, and the chapters to come will be more glorious still.

Men and women, especially young men and women, I envy you. I have no quarrel with my own life; God has been quite gracious unto me. But when I look upon young people today I almost wish I had been born forty years later, that I might have hope to live to see some of the great things that God is going to reveal to you. It surely is true that there are some sitting here tonight who will not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come in power. Be worthy of your time. By the greatness of your time, as well as by the glory of your Saviour, yield yourselves to him unreservedly.

If some of the older among us are called to die, or even some of the younger, still we need not fear. Or if your loved ones go forth and never return, you may be comforted. I find a great many of God's people are not afraid of death, but are afraid of dying. You need fear neither, for in both he delivers magnificently.

Doctor Lorimer, of Tremont Temple in Boston, once told some of us of an experience he had during a journey. He sat in the train opposite an old man and a young girl. The old man seemed greatly interested in the country through which they were passing, and he urged his granddaughter to keep careful watch as they neared a particular spot. Suddenly in excitement he pointed to a house and said, "That is where I married your grandmother." Then Lorimer, interested in the reminiscence, joined the group, and the old man explained.

After the marriage he was to go to the home he had prepared on the other side of the Hudson River.

It was winter and the river was frozen; so he tucked his bride in the sleigh and started. After a while he heard her sigh and asked the reason. She said, "I wish I were over the Hudson." She knew it was frozen and safe, but her woman's fear got the better of her. "Oh," she said, "I wish I were over the Hudson." Her husband tried to reassure her and she seemed content. But when after a while he looked round again, the look of fear was on her face, and in answer to his chiding all she could say was, "I wish I were over the Hudson."

He saw that words were useless, so he drove on, up the hill, down into the valley, across the flat, and looked round again, only to be met with the same desire, "I wish I were over the Hudson." Then he flung the reins on his horse, threw his arms around his bride, and said in triumph, "My darling, you are over." She had crossed the river without knowing it, and her fear fled. That is the way we shall get across, too. Has not our Lord said, "The man that keepeth my saying shall never see death?" Jesus will come between you and it. You will get across the river before you know you have reached it.

Again and again I have thought and thought, and wondered, and pondered as to what I shall do the first minute I am in glory; and I have come to a decision: I think I shall weep. You tell me there are no tears in heaven, but I read that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." He could not wipe them away if they were not there. Then we shall never weep any more. For the last time weeping

that we have doubted the Saviour, weeping at a sight of the glory to which he has brought us, all unworthy as we are, and looking up to him we shall praise him for what he has done for us. Whatever words we shall use or whatever language, we shall in effect say what they wrote, yonder in Algiers, *C'est lui qui délivre magnifiquement.* It is he, and none other. Praise be to his blessed name!

III

THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD

We have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.—*John 4: 42.*

We have seen, and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.—*1 John 4: 14.*

You will see at once that these two texts have their point of contact in the great name given to our Lord Jesus. When he was on earth he never proclaimed himself; he always waited until he was discovered. He is doing the same thing today. That is why the Kingdom of God seems to make such slow progress, and that is why, when once the world discovers its Saviour, the Kingdom will come with lightning speed.

But no one ever discovers the Lord Jesus who has not a revelation given to him from God. John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." But before he said that he saw the Spirit descending like a dove upon our Lord. Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. But Jesus told him immediately, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father, who is in heaven." If you or I discover Jesus Christ, we may be quite sure that the Father or the Spirit has been dealing with us and turning our eyes to behold his beauty.

Who discovered Jesus as the Saviour of the world? It was a woman. A woman partly led by her woman's instinct, and partly goaded by her sin, was the first to proclaim the world's Saviour. She told the men in the city, and they came and repeated to the Lord himself what they had discovered. "He is the Saviour of the World."

How did that woman get to it? There were four reasons. The first was, that she found in him one who was entirely free from prejudice. He had no prejudice of race nor of sex. Not of race—the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans; here was a Jew who had dealings with them on equal terms. Then there was no pride of sex. Our Authorized version says that when the disciples returned they marveled that he talked with *the* woman, as if it was that he talked with that particular woman. But really they marveled that he talked with *a* woman. In that day, that a man should trouble to talk to a woman about deeper things, was a wonder. Here was One, then, free from all prejudice.

Then here was One who knew her need. She had not told him. He had never met her before, but he laid his finger on the spot that marred her life, and he said, "Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband." She went away, and told the men of the city not what Jesus had said; that was not necessary; but she said, "He told me all things that ever I did"—a fine exaggeration that was absolutely true, because, as Charles Finney told us years ago, when a man is convicted of one sin he is convicted of every sin. It was quite clear that he,

who could read her history in one thing, knew it in all things.

The third reason was the confession he made to her. That was the first and only time, until he came to his trial and was condemned by his own evidence, when they could find no evidence against him till he gave it himself—he did not have his life wrested from him; he laid it down of himself—that was the first and only time, until he was condemned, that in express words he said he was the Messiah. Highly favored of women! He whispered the great fact to her. Would not you like him to come and whisper to you that all your longings are fulfilled in him; that your hopes for the world are fulfilled in him; that he is, in fact, the Saviour of the world?

In the fourth place, she found that he was not a sectary. "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain," she said, "and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." She tried to ride off on an argument when the thing was coming too near her own conscience. Just like you: when your sin is being touched you begin to discuss some theological point. Jesus answered her: "The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." Along these four avenues the woman went, and confession came to her lip, that he was the Saviour of the world, which has no other. Her world was very little; our world is much bigger; God's world is a bigger world still, and he is the Saviour of it all.

When our Lord was leaving the world he recalled what this woman had said. He told his disciples that they were to be witnesses for him in Jerusalem and Judea—that was their bit; and in Samaria—that was her bit; and unto the uttermost parts of the earth, as she had said. He was the Saviour of the world—not of a part of it, but of the whole. It is a great thing if we realize the absolute uniqueness of our Lord's mission; if we remember that when God loved, he loved the world; that when Christ died, he died as "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the whole world"; that the Spirit of God has come to "convict *the world* of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

He did not come to judge the world, he did not come to blame,
He did not even come to teach, it was to save he came,
And when we call him Saviour we call him by his name.

Now I am going to offer you two reasons why this is true; very simple reasons; so simple that I think you will be very clever if you forget them. The first reason is that this is a great world; the second, that he is a great Saviour.

I. This Is a Great World

If there are astronomers among you, you will be apt to deny that at once, and say it is a little world, which is absolutely true if you measure it: of the worlds that wheel in space, this is one of the very smallest. Yet it is a great world. For, remember, you do not always estimate things by their size. You do not praise a circle because it is big, but because it

is round. If any of you go to Venice, I hope you will remember Ruskin's advice, and not be misled by the great canvases of Titian to the neglect of the little pictures of Tintoretto, which are much more valuable. You do not judge things by size! "Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou art least among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people, Israel." A little thing can be a great thing, and this little world is a big world. Alfred Russel Wallace in his book on *The Universe, and Man's Place in It,* from a scientific point of view argues that this is the only world amongst all the worlds that is fitted as a dwelling-place for such creatures as ourselves; that there could not be creatures like ourselves living anywhere else, because no other world is ready to receive them. I am not competent either to deny or affirm.

Then geographically it is a great world. I have been round it twice, and I know it is a big world, compared with the little men that dwell on it. There is an awful lot of water in the world; when you go on, week after week, seeing nothing but sea and sky, you get some idea of that. It is a great world geographically, compared with the very little people who sojourn upon it. And yet we are greater than the world. When you look at the mountains, you seem to be a very little person. But you are greater than they are, because you can think of them, and they cannot think of you; you can get to the top of them, but they cannot get to the top of you. This then is a great world geographically.

It is also a great world historically. That is true

if you think what men have discovered. Some of the simplest and most commonplace things of today were his biggest discoveries. Fire, for instance, and wheels: commonplace as these things are, think of what the world would be if we had not discovered them. Men are making discoveries today, so big that we are staggered by them, and we have no conception of the things that our children will learn.

Men have dared great things. Some of the commonplace boys that walked our streets, and whom we never looked at twice, have in the war and in the air risen to deeds of heroism unequalled even in classic times. Historically, this is a great world.

Men have not only discovered much and dared much, but they have sinned much. This is the only world that God has made, where creatures like men whom he may have made, have dared to lift their fist and strike their Maker in the face.

When Mr. Moody was in England for the first time, fifty years ago, you remember what a work of grace was witnessed. The whole place was stirred to its foundation. He went back to his own country hoping for a similar work there, and in large measure it was granted to him. In order that he might do it better he went to Henry Ward Beecher, then alive—no two men were more dissimilar than they—and asked Mr. Beecher to join him in a great evangelistic campaign in the United States. Mr. Beecher took two or three days to think about it. Then he refused, and refused for this reason. He said: "Mr. Moody, my view of the world, and your view of the world are entirely different. We could not get on

together. I look on the world as a ship that God is going to bring into port. You look on the world as a shipwreck from which you must try to save as many as you can." Now which conception is true? Which? They are both true. This is a torpedoed world, and we are seeking to save as many people from the ship as we can. I wish that some of you might be gripped by the power of Christ and rescued from the ship. But God is going to bring the ship into port. Some of these days the world will be at the feet of Jesus, rescued, for he is not only the Saviour of the individual, he is the Saviour of the world. He who came once by the way of the Cross is coming again by the way of the Crown, and it may be sooner than, perhaps, some of us imagine.

II. He Is a Great Saviour

The first thought was only introductory; it was only spoken to show that this is a worthy theater for the exhibition of God's grace, a worthy world for the saving power of the Cross. If I quote a verse from this same Gospel, in a modern version, I think you will approve it. "This is the true light, which, coming into the world, lighteneth every man." Our old version is, "This is the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." But it is not man coming into the world who gets the light, but that the light coming into the world lightens every man. It is true because it is in the Book, and it is true to experience. Even the heathen world is different because he has come, and his beauteous light has shone through the darkness. It may be very

shaded, but I would consider it the sin against the Holy Ghost to think that God has left any nation without some light. You do not know what heathenism is if you have not been in contact with it in heathen lands. You would not, any of you, talk glibly about heathen people being happy if you had ever seen heathenism and the horror of it! But, however great the darkness is today, it was still greater when the apostle said—and he understated it—that the world was "without God and without hope." Think what your life would be without hope. But Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, has changed the world.

There is a story told about Gautama Buddha. Sir Edwin Arnold, in his book *The Light of Asia,* adds some poetic glamor to it, but in essential particulars it is true. Buddha was born and reared in a palace, and was shielded by his father from all knowledge of the sorrow, and sin, and pain of the outer world. The father determined that his boy should not be saddened by the thought of the world's grief, and he commanded that no whisper of it was to reach him. But the boy got to know that there was another world outside, different from the world within the palace grounds, and he could not bear to think of it. So he stole outside, crying, "O world, my world, I hear, I know, I come!" He tried to save it, but failed. His idea was that if men would rid themselves of desire they would rid themselves of sorrow. But, of course, in crushing sorrow in that way they would annihilate themselves.

There was Another who was in a palace, who was

in the glory that he had with his Father, who knew the world's sorrow, and could not let the world suffer alone. He laid aside his glory, he put his royal robe of blue on the sky, and the rings on his fingers he hung up as stars. He came out, and his word was, "O world, my world, I hear, I know, I come!" It was his world, and it is his world. He made it, and by him all things hold together. He came as the world's Saviour. He knows our pain.

> Not alone as God all-knowing,
> As Man our nature he has shared.

He came not only to sympathize, but to save; not only to attempt to save, but to save.

Wesley, in some of his impassioned moments, used sometimes to ask his people to think that, perhaps in some other world than ours, Jesus was dying for the sins of that world. But even if there were millions of worlds and millions of people in each of them who needed to be redeemed, the one sacrifice on Calvary is enough for them all. It was on this world that Jesus died, and that fact singles out this world for ever as the most wonderful world of all the millions in space; it was on this world that Jesus came and shed his blood, and that singles out this world as wonderful beyond all others. He is a great Saviour.

There are two arguments. The first is, that if Jesus is the Saviour of the world, he is a big enough Saviour for you; if he can save the world, he can certainly save you. If Jesus can meet the need of the world, he can certainly meet yours.

The next argument is that if Jesus can meet your need, he can meet the need of the world. Remembering the complexity of my nature and the idiosyncrasies of my life, I say that if Christ can do the saving work for me, he can do it for the whole world.

> If the whole world my Saviour knew,
> Sure the whole world would love him too.

He has come to change the world, and is doing it. He is saving in all sorts of ways, in all sorts of places, by all sorts of means. If the story of what our Lord Jesus Christ has already done and is doing were told, our pulse would beat faster, our blood flow quicker, and our heart thrill to tears. He is saving people who want to be good by showing them how to be good, saving people who are bad, by showing them how much better goodness is; saving people from the horrible pit and the miry clay, putting them upon a rock and establishing their goings; saving respectable people, and saving people who are disrespectful to themselves and to God. He is saving the lost, and the last, and the least; he is saving them in all kinds of ways—by memory, by the simple word of the wayside, by the sermon in the cathedral, by the testimony in the church, by the reading of the Word, by the book, by the tract. Always somewhere Christ is working. He keeps the angels singing all the time.

Has Christ saved you? Can you say, like those people of Sychar, "We have seen him ourselves"? Can you like the woman say, "I have seen him myself, and I know he is the Saviour of the world"?

Can you say, "We have seen, and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world"? If you have seen you will testify, for you cannot hold Christ and hold your tongue at the same time. My own testimony to my Lord may be put in the fine words of another:

I sought thee seeking high and low,
I found thee not, I did not know
I was a sinner; even so
I missed thee, for my Saviour.

I saw thee sweetly condescend,
Of sinful men to be the Friend.
I found thee as my way, my end,
But found not yet my Saviour.

Until upon the Cross I saw
My God who died to keep the law
That man had broken—then I saw
My sin and then my Saviour.

Christ is going to save the world. All that he is doing today is preparatory to that great work. He saves you because he wants you to help him. Jesus alone can save the world, but cannot save the world alone. He wants you to help him. He cannot speak to the people, but he can use you to speak to them; he cannot distribute Bibles, but he can use you to do that. He needs you and me.

When General Nicholson went to the relief of Delhi, in the Mutiny, he knew, and his soldiers knew too, that it had to be done quickly. But one day his men, exhausted, asked the general that they might rest awhile. He looked at them and saw that they

were worn out, and he allowed them to rest. They flung themselves down, some on this side of the road, some on that. He did not chide them; he knew they were tired. But he, more tired than any of them, sat on his horse in the middle of the road, with the pitiless Indian sun beating down on him. That picture fades and there is another—the Captain of my salvation who once said to his disciples, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" and he is waiting. We are not waiting for him; he is waiting for us. When the church is ready he will win the day.

He is certain to succeed. You cannot believe that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world, and that the Father will be disappointed. You cannot believe that Jesus Christ, who came to be the Saviour of the world, will fail to do that which he came to accomplish. You may be quite sure that he will succeed.

Shall he succeed with you? Do what the people of Sychar did if you have any doubt about the Lord Jesus and his saving power, if you have any difficulty about yourself, do what they did—take Christ home with you for two days. When you get rid of the crowd, say to yourself, "I will receive Christ at least for two days." If you have him on Monday and Tuesday, when Wednesday morning dawns it will dawn with a song of praise, and you will say, "We have seen for ourselves, and we know he is the Saviour of the world."

The world will some day say to the church: "You have tried to tell us, and we thank you; but now we do not need you, for we have seen him ourselves, and

we know that this is the Saviour of the world." And you will be able to say, "We have seen, and do testify"—because you will testify it too—"that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." The missionary societies will then have fulfilled their purpose, and the world will say, "Thank you, missionary societies, for all you have done, but we do not need you now, there is no need to send out any more missionaries." I expect that some day people will come from China, and India, and Africa, and from the ends of the earth, and tell us what they have discovered about Jesus, and this Eastern faith of ours, having passed through the alembic of the Eastern mind once more, will come back to us more glorious than ever, and we shall say, "We knew Jesus was Saviour, but we never knew he was such a Saviour!"

The faith of Jesus Christ is not *a* religion; it is religion. There may be glimmers of truth in other religious systems, but the faith of Jesus is religion itself. When you know him you have the beginning and end of things. Beyond that there is nothing, for everything that is in God is in Jesus, and everything that is in Jesus is in God! Saviour of the world, we worship thee!

One of the great recent books has been *The Life and Letters of Mr. Walter Page,* the American Ambassador in England just before and in the early years of the war. In one letter he says that just before the war he went down to the Admiralty, and saw Jellicoe, and Jellicoe said to him: "Mr. Page, the Admiralty never sleeps. I have even got a tele-

phone beside my bed." Mr. Page, in his whimsical way, said, "And did it ever ring?" Then Jellicoe looked up quite solemnly and said, "No; but it will." One night it rang, and the message went down to Portsmouth that the fleet was to start, and five minutes afterward the message came that the fleet was off. Look on the world today. Nothing happens. You say the world is just the same as ever; things are as they always have been; there is no change. You look at the church, and you say the church is making scant progress, pews are empty, people are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, the world is not making progress at all. "Did it ever ring?" we ask wistfully. "No; but it will." Make no mistake. Jesus is the Saviour of the world. The bell will ring some day, not to usher in a war, but to bring in eternal peace; not to urge men to slay each other, but to rouse men to grasp each other's hands as brothers; ring not for destruction, but for salvation.

The Admiralty never sleeps, and we must never sleep. We must always keep a wakeful heart; be always ready for the great thing the Lord is preparing for us. If you want to know the wisest thing ever said about the Lord's second advent, I think I can tell you. Of course, it was said by a woman—Miss Havergal. "When the Lord comes there will be nobody able to turn to anybody else and say, 'I told you so!'" It will be all so different from what any of us expect, so much more glorious, because he is more glorious than our highest thought.

But, oh, men and women, he who can save the

world can save you; and he who can save you can save the world. So with personal faith in Christ, may we each day live with buoyant step, and mind alert; our eye eagerly looking for the first traces of the dawn behind the hill, knowing that the Sun, soon or late, will presently arise and cover the whole world with his glory.

IV

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

I determined not to know anything among you save Christ Jesus and him crucified.—*1 Corinthians 2: 2.*

It seemed a hopeless thing for Paul to go into the gay and polyglot city of Corinth and seek to change it, and yet the little tent-maker succeeded. He went there, and men and women were lifted out of the sloughs into which they had fallen, and were changed. He gives a list of awful sins, and says, "Such were some of you, but ye are washed, ye are sanctified by the Spirit of the Lord, and in the name of the Lord Jesus." And now, years afterward, he writes to them to tell them what were his hopes, and to point out to them the means by which the great transformation was effected. It was good for them, good for him.

Paul bore the brands of the Lord Jesus, but he never had the stigmata as, I suppose, Francis of Assisi had, and Catherine of Sienna; yet there came a day in Paul's life when he was able to say in a way he never said before, "I have been crucified with Christ." There is reason to suppose that the day came on his way from Athens to Corinth. I may suggest to you some reason for believing that he was greatly exercised in his mind in his journey across the little isthmus that separates the two cities, and got such a vision of the Cross that he knew

that he himself was crucified; then he went into Corinth a more determined man than ever he had been before, and in the secret of his own soul this was his resolution—nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. He did not preach Paul crucified. Paul was crucified to be put out of the way, so that only Christ should be praised.

That is all the more remarkable when we think that probably Paul never knew Jesus before he was crucified, never saw him on the Cross. Of course, it is quite possible to say that when he writes, "Henceforth we know not Christ after the flesh," he hints that he may have seen him, but I think he never knew Christ as he was crucified; he had his first sight of Christ as glorified. You would have thought then that he would preach Christ glorified amongst the people, and indeed he did preach Christ glorified to the perfect, but when he sought to change men who were without Christ he preached Christ crucified. Not the crucifixion, remember, not telling the story which by its pathos moves human hearts, but the Christ who was crucified; not the crucifix as if Christ was evermore hanging on the tree in agony—thank God that agony is over, though he still suffers with suffering men—not Christ incarnate, though he knew the story; he had heard about the lovely life Christ had lived, he knew the beautiful example that Christ had given, but he knew that that alone would be powerless to make men live in the same way. He came with this mighty dynamic of God, he tested it, and years afterward he wrote to them saying that that truth was

the one thing that would charge and change human lives. "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

He did not bring this to those Corinthians as the minimum of his doctrine; he preached it as the maximum, the thing that was all-inclusive. There is nothing they were to know for earth or heaven that is not included in that formula, "Jesus Christ and him crucified."

> Very dear the Cross of shame,
> Where he bore the sinner's blame,
> And the tomb wherein the Saviour lay
> Until the third day came.
>
> But he bore the self-same load,
> And he went the same high road
> When the carpenter of Nazareth
> Made common things for God.

The Mighty Theme

Now what did he mean by it? He meant, first of all, to convict the people of their sin. There is no conviction of sin that is worth while unless it is in sight of the Cross. The Cross is the culmination of man's guilt—"which none of the men of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." God came in Christ to man at his best, for say what you will about the Pharisees that were in Palestine at that time they had reached the height of religious culture. And God came in a way that would seem to have commended him to man—lowly and gentle and beneficent and tender, and you would have thought that

men at their best would have received God at his best. But man crucified him.

It is quite possible, my friends, for us to exaggerate individual acts; it is quite possible for us to magnify individual sins, but it is not possible for us to exaggerate the attitude of the human heart to God. God at his best met man at his best, and the result was a cross for Jesus Christ. That is sin, and when the Spirit convicts us of sin, it is because we believe not on Jesus. People who are guilty of that sin can be guilty of any sin, and the thing for us to learn about sin is that the sinner is always greater than his sin. You could not commit a big sin if you were not a bigger sinner.

And then in the Cross there is revealed God's righteousness, for even when sin was only imputed to Jesus, the righteousness of God struck him down. There is such a thing as eternal righteousness in the universe, and it is revealed in the Cross. Righteousness is not only what people agree to call right; righteousness is in the very nature of things in the very heart of God. The Cross shows that if we fall short of it, woe betide us, unless we go to the Cross and find there God's love and power and wisdom that come and meet us in our guilt, bear our sin and take it away, and give us a lavish gift that meets all our need.

It is quite fashionable today for men to say that the Cross means that God is willing to go all lengths, even to die, without relating God's death to our need. Now that to me is just nonsense. If I find a man, for instance, in debt, and I say I am willing to show

him that I am ready to suffer for him, and to show it I take all the treasury notes I happen to possess, put them in the fire, and say, "I am willing to sacrifice to the full extent," how do I help that man? Not at all. There is no relation between my sacrifice and his need. But if I go to a man who is in need and in debt, and I take those treasury notes, and if they happen to be sufficient to meet his need, I pass them over to him, there is relation between sacrifice and need. When I come to the Cross, if there is no relation between the Cross and my need, the Cross is nothing. But the Cross is everything; therefore there is relation between my need and the Cross, and I find in the Cross all that my sins can merit and all that God's justice can demand.

So Paul went to Corinth, knowing what the Cross meant, not knowing it all indeed, for none of us knows it all, but knowing enough of it to move him to the very center of his being, and he said he would preach Jesus Christ crucified. You say he went into Corinth fiddling on one string. Well, if a man is a Paganini he can make music even out of one string. The Cross is not one string, the Cross is a whole orchestra of music; if you have the deep obligato of man's sin, you have the high diapason of God's grace that overwhelms it; the Cross is the harmony of the universe, and we may be content to receive it as the revelation of God. He preached Jesus as Christ to the Jews; to the Greeks he showed that the Christ indeed was Jesus, and he might have said, though the words were written a good many centuries after he spoke:

Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus,
I've lost sight of all beside;
So entranced my spirit's vision,
Gazing on the Crucified.

He did not preach Christ crucified because he knew nothing else. He could have talked about many other things. To the Greeks he could have talked poetry and philosophy, and he did talk to them like that at Athens. His sermon at Athens is the finest sermon of the Acts of the Apostles after the model of the schools of reason; he met them on their own ground, he quoted heathen poetry, he quoted from two poets, it was a finished production, and at the end there were only two converts—God did not leave his servant without a witness—Dionysius the Areopagite, and Damaris, probably no others. There was no church in Athens; there is no epistle to the Athenians, and yet Paul's great sermon was preached there. Paul turned from Athens and walked across the isthmus to Corinth, and he said to himself, "Never again; I will never descend to that kind of thing; I could do it, but I determine not to do it, 'I will preach nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified.'" To the Jews he could have opened up all rabbinical lore; he knew it all, he had sat at the feet of Gamaliel. To the Romans he could have talked about jurisprudence and law; he could have informed them that he was a Roman, proud of being a Roman, but he put all aside, philosophy, poetry, law, rabbinical lore, and said, "There is nothing worth while, there is nothing will change men, but the Cross of Jesus; I will preach that."

Now I believe I am speaking to some ministers of the gospel; I would venture to say with all humility, as a brother minister, that if you want to make your ministry successful you must follow Paul's example. You will make your preaching perhaps a bit narrower than it has been before. I have been there, and I know the temptation is to show your people that you *can*—but that is not going to do the work of Christ. A very competent critic was asked his opinion of a great American preacher, and he gave this as his verdict: "He is a first-class preacher of second-class truths." Now I would rather be a second-class preacher of first-class truths. Of course, Paul was a first-class preacher of first-class truths, and that is the best of all. Anyhow, let the truth be first-class. Christ crucified is the first-class truth, the high concert note. It is enough for all. It brings repentance, it awakens faith, it leads to consecration; it is enough for life, it is enough for death, the remedy for all human guilt, the exemplar for all human life, the glory of heaven, as also the glory of the church on earth.

The Weak Preacher

Such a gospel as that does not depend a great deal on the preacher. The gospel does not win its way because the preachers of it are clever men, strong men, brilliant men. Thank God for all the brilliance and power that have been in the pulpits of the church; but Paul said when he went to Corinth he was "in weakness and fear and much trembling"; and sometimes when my friends tell me that I ought

to feel always strong and always on the mountain-top, I am glad to turn to Paul, and find that he sometimes was in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and it was then that God used him. The man who comes proud and self-sufficient will not be used. He gets between people and the Christ, he puts himself in front of the Cross; but when there are weakness and fear and much trembling, then indeed there is opportunity for the power of God. And this man, weak in himself but determined to be weaker, said he would not preach the Cross of Christ with words of man's wisdom; he knew the witchery of words, he knew the power of human language; he could on occasion use it, but he said to himself, "I will not surround the Cross with the arts of man lest people mistake the message and be carried away with the brilliance of the presentation."

You remember the painter who painted the Last Supper, and before he exhibited it, called his friends for a private view. They said it was glorious, beautiful, and especially the cup, with its chasing, such a bit of painting as had never been excelled. They praised the cup. He knew he had failed, and when they had gone he took his brush and said, "I painted my Lord, and they praised the cup," and he painted the cup out. It was worth while, was it not? I am fond of Turner's pictures, the glorious coloring, the haze, and the heavenly vistas, but sometimes it is a little difficult to know what he is after. You see, for example, a flag on the top of a mast and somebody says, "That is a picture of a ship." It is a good thing they tell you, otherwise you really would

not know. And yet it is beautiful, you say it is magnificent, you admire it. And I have heard sermons sometimes that are like that. They are often eloquent, when they are reported in the paper, the reporter says there were some fine epigrams, some beautiful bits of oratory, the sentences were turned well, but if that is all, they have indeed failed. What was it all about? Nobody was able to mistake what Paul preached. He said, "I preach Christ and him crucified, and I determined not to know anything else." As for the other school of sermons, an old lady was asked what the sermon to which she had listened was about, and she stuttered and said, "It was about, about"—and she was not going to be without an answer, so she said, "It was about half an hour."

The Weak Preacher Does Not Hinder the Mighty Name

Now the apostle determined not to preach anything else but Christ crucified, in order that their faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God; and if our faith stands anywhere else, it will not stand the stress of the Great Day. If you build your faith on man's wisdom, you will prove man's wisdom to be folly. If you build your faith on the excellence of words, what are words? But if you build your faith on the power of God, then it is well. The Spirit is the great demonstrator. Paul said, "not in the wisdom of man, but in the demonstration of the Spirit." It is the only time the expression occurs in the New Testament. The

Spirit delights to honor the Cross. Where Christ suffered, there Christ is glorified, there the Spirit is the Demonstrator, and the resulting faith does not stand in man's wisdom, but in God's wisdom. The rhetoric of the preacher may fail, but the eloquence of the Holy Ghost is sufficient. The logic of the preacher may be faulty, but the demonstration of the Spirit has no flaw, and when the Cross is preached the Spirit of God can take that truth and apply it.

The Cross to you means that you yourself are the sinner. Brownlow North, the great Scottish evangelist, had on the fly-leaf of his Bible these words—if any one picked it up and wanted to know who the book belonged to, they not only knew his name, but his faith—"Brownlow North, a man whose sins crucified the Lord of Glory." The same is true of my sin, your sin. If there was only one man in the world, and that man was to be kept alive, the sun that is now shining on us would have to shine; nothing less would suffice for one man, yet that same sun avails for millions. If there had only been one sinner in the world, Christ would have needed to die to save that man, and you are that man, and I am that man, as if there were none else in the world but Christ and me. He died for me, and that act, the one death for me, is sufficient for all.

Do you know anything about the Cross of Christ convicting of sin? Do you know anything about the Cross—Christ bearing your sin on the tree, taking your sin and making an end of it? Some of my friends tell me that their sins were buried in Christ's grave. My sins never got so far; they were finished

on the Cross; he took my sin to the tree, and there he made an end of it. Oh may the Spirit of God take us to the foot of the Cross in imagining today, and may we see there the vision that no human eye can see, understand and know this mystery beyond all human imagining; and when we come to the end of ourselves and understand how little we know, may the litany of the Greek Church come to our mind: "O Lord, by thine unknown sufferings atone thou for my unknown sins."

Years ago, when I was out on my journeys, I wanted very much to see that great constellation in the southern skies, the Southern Cross. I got far south enough coming back from China to see it, but something always interfered; either the moon shone too clearly and the constellation was not visible, or the clouds were too thick and the constellation was obscured, and I was on the wrong side of the ship. One night at dinner I said, "I want to see the Southern Cross before we go north," and a gentleman opposite said, "I am on that side. I lie awake a great many hours, and the first time it is visible, I will come and awaken you." The very next night a rude hand was placed on my shoulder, and this gentleman shook me and said, "You can see the Southern Cross." I did not mind the shaking; I wanted to see the Cross. And if you want to see the Cross you will not mind a bit of a shaking. I got out just as I was, and went on deck, and there I saw the thing I desired to see, the great shining Cross in the purple sky. There was nobody on deck and I began to sing. I walked up and down the deck sing-

ing. I was opposite the island of Socotra, and a little while before a friend of mine, a missionary, had been wrecked there and drowned. She had gone out for the sake of the Cross, giving her life in the service of the Saviour, and as I thought of her, and of Him, and of myself and what I owe to Christ, and looked at the Cross, I sang:

> It is the old Cross still, hallelujah!
> Its praises let us tell, hallelujah!
> So round the Cross we sing
> Of Christ our offering;
> Of Christ our living King,
> Hallelujah for the Cross!

The Cross is already changing the world. When in the olden days the Crusaders were likely to be turned out of the Holy Land by the Turks, Cardinal Lanfranchi, Archbishop of Pisa, determined to get some of the soil of Calvary for the Campo Santo of his city, so he commissioned fifty-three ships to bring it. It was strewn on the resting-place of the dead at Pisa, and the next year a new flower appeared—the ringed anemone. The year following there were more, and as the years passed, the seed, carried by the wind, spread beyond the walls of the Campo Santo and the ringed anemone grew in the country around. Today, in the proper season, the Tuscan plains are covered with it. Ask the people where it came from, and they will look at you in astonishment. It was always there, they will answer, there in their fathers' day and in their grandfathers' day. Its native origin is taken for granted because it is so common. But it came from Calvary, long ago. And

if we ask where the things of beauty round us come from, the care of the children, the sympathy for the sick, the thoughtfulness for the poor, the helpfulness for the weak, we shall make a mistake if we say they grew from the human heart, that they were always there. Like the ringed anemone, they came from Calvary; they are in the world today because Christ was crucified, and the living seed will yet increase and at length cover the world with beauty.

V

THE LORDSHIP OF THE SPIRIT

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.— *2 Corinthians 3: 17.*

The apostle is contrasting the glory which was on the face of Moses and passed away, with the glory that excelleth, which is ours in Jesus Christ and does not pass—at least, it need not pass. He is referring, of course, to the record in the Book of Exodus (34: 34) : " When Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him." Moses so companied with God on Mount Sinai that he came down with a shining face. It is still possible for us to have the glory of God shine through our countenances.

On Moses' face the glory was so great that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold it. Yet the apostle says that the glory that Christ gives is far greater than that. He tells us, too, in this third chapter, that while the law of God is read " even unto this day," there is a veil on the face of the Jews. I am afraid the veil is on the face of many more of us.

It is a very adroit use of the illustration, because in the Old Testament the veil was not on the face of the people, but on the face of Moses; but the veil was between them and the glory, and the veil is still between them and the glory. "When they turn to the Lord the veil shall be taken away." When they turn to the Lord! Who is the Lord? You read in the seventeenth verse, "Now the Lord is that Spirit," the Spirit about whom he had been speaking, the Spirit of the living God; and the first thing we must settle in our minds is, that the God of Pentecost is also the God of Sinai, and the God of Sinai is the God of Pentecost—not two Gods. "The Lord is that Spirit." He who gave the law of Sinai gave the fire of Pentecost. Then the verse goes on to say in our version, "The Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

I often read that with the consciousness that there was something not quite clear about it, because, since the Lord is the Spirit, to say "where the Spirit of the Lord is" is like saying "where the Spirit of the Spirit is." I could not think that that was what was intended or what the apostle Paul wrote. I thought, and thought, and at last there came to me just what was self-evidencing about it. I looked up commentaries and could not find anybody to help me—commentaries are very good if the passage is clear, but if there is obscurity in the passage you generally find that they slip over it quietly—I found no guidance until I came to a book not much known, but very valuable, Mr. Rotherham's "Emphasized Bible." He gives the literal translation, not always

polished in its English, but always faithful to the text, and he translates this text, "Where the Spirit of one that is Lord is, there is freedom." Then tucked away in a foot-note he says, "Probably a primitive error for 'Where the Spirit is Lord.'" That was the thing that had come to me independently. I claim no right in the discovery, because it is embodied in the text; I think it is self-evident that that is what the apostle meant, and what the Spirit meant through the apostle—"where the Spirit is Lord" not "where the Spirit of the Lord is."

The last verse of this chapter has always been a perplexity to translators. "We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The Revised version gives "even by the Lord the Spirit," and another version gives "even by the Spirit which is the Lord." But nobody is satisfied with the translation even now, apparently. Accept the earlier suggestion, "Where the Spirit is Lord, there is liberty," and then there is no difficulty in translating the final clause of the chapter, because it will read, "even by the Spirit who is Lord." That is a thing that I want to press home—that the Spirit of God is to be Lord. It is not quite true—at least, it is only relatively true—to say, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." We believe the Spirit of God is in the church, but there are some churches which are in bondage, though the Spirit is there. It is not quite true in Christian experience, because though you are born again of the Spirit, there may not be liberty.

But if you will get here—where the Spirit is Lord—then there is liberty.

I therefore want to speak very simply, with all due subjection to God's guidance, about two things: First of all, the Lordship of the Spirit; and, secondly, the liberty of that Lordship. There can be no doubt as to what spirit is meant. It is not our own spirit; it is the Spirit of God, "the Spirit of the living God," as you have in an earlier verse.

I. The Lordship of the Spirit

Unless a man recognizes the Lordship of the Spirit, he can never have lordship over himself. The apostle prays that we may be sanctified wholly, spirit, soul, and body. Not, as is sometimes quoted, body, soul, and spirit. He puts the important things first. I am aware, of course, that psychologists today will not accept that division of manhood. They say there are only two divisions—the thing that is seen, and the thing that is not seen. But I am not in bondage to the psychologists. I would rather take what the apostle Paul gives us, and accept the division of man's nature as spirit, soul, and body; indeed, I may bluntly say that I would rather be wrong with the apostle Paul than right with any number of psychologists.

Broadly speaking, man is a unit, but in our thought there are three divisions, and we may think of the spirit as that part of man which opens out to God; the soul as that part which has emotions and volitions and intellect; and the body, of course, needs no description.

The order that God meant was that the spirit should be supreme in the human entity, that the soul and the body should be under the domination of the spirit. But the tragedy is that that has somehow been subverted. If the soul, those mental and emotional faculties, reigns in man, then man will be a reasonable and intellectual being. If the body reigns in man, he may be a sensual and passionate animal, and go lower than the animal because he has capacity to go higher. He is never right until the spirit reigns over soul and body.

But the tragedy of life is that the spirit somehow is dull and inert, and if there was not in the Bible the story of the Fall of Man, you would have to invent some story to account for that present-day fact. The spirit ought to rule, but, instead of that, the spirit in unregenerate man seems held captive by soul and body. If a man is not under lordship, the spirit is not in authority. Like the centurion, who was under authority, and therefore in authority, unless our spirit is under authority we cannot have authority. If a man is unmastered, he is open to all the seductions of the world, the blasts of passion, the whirl of pleasure, the appeals of the flesh.

Nothing can master a man made in God's image, but God, and God cannot touch a man except by his Spirit. So it comes that unless the Spirit is Lord the man is unmastered, and therefore his nature is not in harmony. Nothing can do it but the Spirit of God. The law cannot do it. The Spirit of God gave the law when it was particularly needed, and you know, and I know, that the commandment

arouses the sin that it forbids, and then condemns the sin that the commandment has suggested.

Resolutions will not do it. They will be like the bonds that bound Samson: easily broken when the desire arises. I will say another thing which probably you will question—even the very history and memory of our Lord Jesus Christ will not do it. The memory of a life lived fair and beautiful on this earth is not sufficient to master me today. That is the great lack in some present-day teaching. The Jesus of history is wonderful, and the more we study his earthly life the more we admire and glorify his name. But I want to know how the Jesus of history is connected with me today, how a life lived amongst Galilean hills can act upon me here amongst the hills of my own country. That can only be by the Spirit of Jesus, of the Lord, of God, and when I am mastered by the Spirit, then the life of Jesus comes to me as the glorious pattern and possibility for my own life.

It is possible for the Spirit to be in a human life, and not be Lord; it is possible for you to have the Spirit, and yet not to have made him the Lord of your being.

The Spirit may be less than Lord to a saint. He may be the acknowledged Source of the new Life, a power in the forgotten past, an article in the creed, a mystery to be believed in but not approached, and not Lord.

The Spirit may be only an occasional visitor, coming to you in seasons of revival, or in times when sorrow and perplexity visit you, and earthly things

grow dim—then you turn and seek the Spirit, and yet he may not be Lord.

The Spirit may be in your mind only to be associated with religious observance, to be found in church, to be meditated by holy men, to come to you in times of worship, and not be Lord.

The Spirit may be dwelling with you as a grieved Spirit—grieved, but not departed. For do not mistake. When you grieve the Spirit he does not leave you any more than your dear friend at home leaves you when you grieve him. The awful thing about the grieved Spirit is, that when you grieve him by worldliness, or carelessness, or anger, or malice, he is there all the time dwelling in you—grieved. I know that David, in the Fifty-first Psalm, prayed, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me"; but that was in the Old Testament, and in the Old Testament the Spirit came and went. But the promise of Jesus is that the Spirit comes and dwells with us forever. He may be a grieved Spirit, and not Lord.

The Spirit in you may be engaged in warfare—a struggling Spirit. He may be lusting against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit, and the issue of the fight apparently uncertain, because the Spirit is not yet Lord.

The Spirit may even be recognized as Joy-bringer, as Comforter, as Helper, and yet, having gone so far, you may not have gone the whole length and said, He is Lord. Indeed I have heard people say, trying to expound the mystery of the Holy Ghost, "Obey the Spirit, and the Spirit will obey you." The Spirit will never obey you. The Spirit is never your servant,

but always your Lord, always supreme. He will sometimes do all you want, but he is not your servant, but he to whom you must bow with deep reverence. He is Lord. Gounod, the musician, when he began his musical life, thought there were only two musicians in the world of any account—Gounod and Mozart. Later he altered his opinion, and said there were Mozart and Gounod. Before he ended there was only Mozart; Gounod did not count. When we make the Spirit Lord, self will disappear. That is the thing we have in that great hymn of George Matheson—the blind man who saw so far:

Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free;
Force me to render up my sword,
And I shall conqueror be.
I sink in life's alarms
When by myself I stand;
Imprison me within thine arms,
And strong shall be my hand.

My will is not my own
Till thou hast made it thine;
If it would reach the monarch's throne
It must its crown resign:
It only stands unbent
Amid the clashing strife
When on thy bosom it has leant,
And found in thee its life.

With all the vehemence and urgency of my nature, I press upon you that which in a little measure I myself have discovered—that you make the Spirit Lord, and then you have liberty. Because when the Spirit is Lord you are delivered from externals.

You welcome external things, but only as they mediate the Spirit. You are delivered even from the commandment. The commandment is holy and righteous and good, but when the Spirit is Lord the commandment is not the rule of your life. Those ten words on Sinai, given by the same Lord, are always the guide to morality, but when you have the Spirit as Lord you go much farther than they do. "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." If the Spirit is Lord in your life, you do not need to be under that law. If the Spirit is Lord, you do not need to be urged and whipped by commandments, though you welcome commandments as indicating right, because he is the Spirit of Holiness and dwells within. You do not even need injunctions to serve Christ, though you are glad to have them. You do not need the word that says you are to forgive your brother until seventy times seven. The Spirit who is Lord is forgiving you all the time, and if forgiven you are ready to forgive. Do not misunderstand. I am not belittling the commandments, I am pointing to that which leads to the fulfilment of them. If the Spirit is Lord in your life, you will welcome them all, but the spring and seat and source of the life is the Spirit himself, who is not only in you, but Lord within.

II. Then There Is the Liberty of that Lordship

To be captive is to be free. We have had it in our hymn; we have it in our experience. The only way for a man to be at liberty is to be mastered. A railway engine is made for two rails and would not

be free in a plowed field. Unless it is on the rails it is not free. You are made for God as the engine was made for rails, and God reveals himself in these days by his Spirit. He may have further revelation to give us; he may yet reveal himself in all the fulness of his Godhead. But meanwhile it is by his Spirit that he reveals himself, and when the Spirit is Lord, there is liberty. That is the only way to get rid of the difficulties as to conduct. People ask, "May I go here?" "May I do this?" and so on. If you make the Spirit Lord the matter will largely resolve itself, and you will never want to ask these questions. You will not need to seek human guidance. It is the Spirit that is to have the Lordship over you.

About these worldly things I will tell you a story. I know a man who was an officer in a crack regiment and spent a great deal of time fox hunting. But he was converted and gave up his hunting without anybody telling him to do so. Some time afterward he was at an assembly, and there a lady whom he knew came up to him and said: "Captain, I hear you have been converted. You have given up your hunting?" "Yes, I have." "Well, now, captain, if there was a hunt next week, you would like to come, would you not?" He said: "Lady Mary, when I was a boy I was very fond of marbles, but when I got fond of horses I lost all taste for marbles. Will you go and just turn that over in your mind?" A while afterward she too was converted, and he heard of it, much to his astonishment. They met again at some place, and he said:

"I hear, Lady Mary, that you have been converted, and that you have given up dancing. But, Lady Mary, if there was a ball next week, you would really like to go, would you not?" She said: "Captain, when I was a girl I was very fond of dolls, but when I got fond of dancing, I forgot all about dolls. Now, captain, you go and turn that over in your mind."

Make the Spirit Lord, and these things will settle themselves; you will not need to have rules as to your conduct in emergencies. If the Spirit is Lord you will just have to obey him. It will all be wonderfully simple, even though you have a stern fight for this liberty. But you fight not because you are doubtful but because you are at rest, because you have the Spirit directing you. That life is simple, and even in the fiercest battle your heart will be quiet.

The apostle takes the image of a mirror. He says, "We, beholding as in a glass." If he were alive today probably he would take the illustration of a camera. Yonder is an object, and I want the image of that object on my prepared plate, glass or film. How can I get it? I must direct my camera on to the object, and then focus it aright. Now that I have that camera focused on the object, will it appear on the sensitized plate? Not necessarily, for if the camera is shut there will be no result. You must make the light *lord*. The image can only be reproduced by light. Open your camera, let the light in, and the image is here. But you say, "Your illustration is failing. You must not underexpose." That is the fault with most Christian people; they

do not look on Jesus long enough. "There is another difficulty," you say; "you must not overexpose." In this case no overexposure is possible. If I desire to be like Jesus, I turn my whole being toward him, get rightly focused through his Word, then, as I make the Spirit Lord, light shines in, and the image of Jesus comes into my heart forever. And now, overexposure being impossible, I behold the image of Christ, and I am changed; not that I change myself, or try with resolutions to alter myself, but I am changed quietly, insensibly. And—let me say it very reverently—I, a human spirit, mastered by the Holy Spirit, become a holy spirit; and my soul mastered by my spirit becomes a holy soul; and my body mastered by my spirit and my soul becomes a holy body, and I become a holy man!

You and I cannot hope to be perfect, because we fall short of God's glory. But we may hope by God's grace and the Spirit's power to be holy. And so, when the Spirit is Lord, there is liberty. God's ultimate purpose for his people is twofold—love and liberty. At last he will have people who will be absolutely free and yet perfectly holy. That is why he made us men, and not machines.

The real word behind all liberty is *naturalness.* The prodigal came to himself before he came to his father; but he came to himself a great deal more when he had come to his father. God wants you to be yourself, and me to be myself. The trouble with most of us who company with Christians is that we try to be like other people. We are like so many eggs in a basket, of one size and shape and color.

I hope you will forgive me when I say that I have not the least desire to be like any one of you. We both want to be like the Lord, and when like the Lord we are most like ourselves. I spent a month in Finisterre and in the early summer saw evergreen trees shaped into all sorts of fantastic forms. But if you went there in the autumn, you would find that the new life has laughed at the aimless labor. Those trees, trimmed into the form of a peacock, or a goose, or a cheese, have broken out into all kinds of quaint shapes and forms. I like to see Christian people a little fantastic and eccentric. It would be a poor world if all the trees in it were like the trees you have in a children's Noah's ark.

The Lordship of the Spirit does not lessen the honor I give to Jesus Christ, for it is the office of the Spirit to make him more glorious. Let me tell you a thing that I think happened at Corinth once. The saints in Corinth were having a meeting, and as they were praising the Lord, a Jew who hated Jesus came and cried out, in the midst of their enthusiasm, *Anathema Iesous!* Then those people with one consent rose in their loyalty to the Lord, and shouted out from the depths of their heart, *Kurios Iesous!* He said, *Anathema Jesus!* and they said "Lord Jesus!" The apostle Paul heard of that, and when he wrote the letter to Corinth (1 Cor. 12: 3) he said: "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." Let me revert to my camera again. If you make the light lord of your camera, you do not

get a picture of the light, but a picture of the object that the light glorifies. If I make the Spirit lord of my life, it is not that I glorify the Spirit by whom I am mastered, but that I receive the image of him whom the Spirit glorifies.

So I summon you to make the Spirit lord. He will teach you to say, "Lord Jesus"; and you will not need rules for living—you will just live; you will not need rules for loving—you will just love; you will not need rules for giving—you will just give. You will live spontaneously and naturally and joyously, and people will see glory on your face, too, and they will say, "That is a man, a man as man ought to be who is mastered by the Holy Spirit." You will think right, and not be carried about by every wind of doctrine, and every wave of doubt, and every wile of the devil. You will be free because controlled, and live to his praise who has called us from darkness into his marvelous light.

VI

WITH GOD ALL THINGS POSSIBLE

With God all things are possible.—*Mark 10: 27.*

There are two truths in these words that need to be written upon the hearts of God's children. The first, which is the lesser truth, is that God is able to do for man what man would deem to be impossible. That is a great truth, but it is the lesser of the two. If we learn that, we shall be ready for the other, that is written in the words before us. Perhaps we do not see it, but it is there. This we do see, that God is able to do for man what man deems to be impossible.

I. Nothing Is Impossible to God

We have many illustrations of it in the Scripture. The first is in Genesis 18. There stands before us the father of the faithful. We read in the chapter that the Lord God visited Abraham, and he said, "I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son." And again he said to Abraham, "Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?" The answer to Sarah's laughter is this, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" If there are some who read these words with almost derisive laughter when they hear of the

great things others say God can do, the answer to the laughter of your heart, which no doubt you will deny as Sarah denied her laughter, is this, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

Abraham believed God. We are told in the Authorized version of the fourth chapter of Romans that Abraham did not look at his body being old, and did not waver in unbelief. The Revised version gives it that Abraham considered his body being old as good as dead; he did not shirk the difficulties, and yet, in spite of them all, he never wavered in faith. "With God all things are possible."

The next illustration in the Book is in Job, the last chapter. Job said, "I know thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee." That seems an ordinary statement. We all believe that God can do everything. We believe in a general sort of way that God can do things we do not understand, that God can do things he has never done before. I hope we all of us see that God can do things that transcend what we are pleased to speak of as the laws of nature. The laws of nature are God's methods of working, but God is not bound by the methods he has hitherto chosen. He can work by any method he chooses. It is a very difficult thing when you come to Job's standpoint to learn it for yourself as he learned it after long pain, and trial, and argument, and trying to probe into the mystery. He wanted to know why he suffered. The solution of it all was that God revealed himself, and Job realized that God could do anything, and he rested upon that in spite of trial. He was content

to be quiet in the midst of the test, knowing that God was his great Vindicator. That is the translation of the word, "I know that my Redeemer—my Vindicator—liveth."

The next example is in Jeremiah 32. We speak of Jeremiah as the weeping prophet, but he was really the believing prophet. His land was overrun by the enemy; it seemed as though there was no hope for it, yet Jeremiah believed God, and believed that God was going to be true to his promises; he believed that the land was still going to be God's land, in spite of all the enemies. Jeremiah had a cousin, and his cousin knew that he was a man of faith; he himself thought faith was a visionary thing. Still he thought he might as well take advantage of Jeremiah's faith in those days of trying circumstances. Hanameel came to Jeremiah, and proposed that Jeremiah should buy from him a piece of land. The land was worthless, but, as Jeremiah believed, here was a chance for him to act upon his faith. Jeremiah rose to it; he bought the land—paid the price—seventeen shekels, and each shekel was a testimony to faith. His faith in God was similar to the faith of that Roman citizen in his country, who, when Hannibal was at Accis, three miles from the city, bought at full value the land whereon Hannibal was encamped. Jeremiah believed that the God of the land would bring his people back to the land, and he had confidence. He had met God before he met Hanameel, and, after he had settled it all as we read in 32: 17, he prayed: "Ah, Lord God! behold thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great

power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee," and God answered him (verse 27), "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for me?"

That is faith, and to faith of that sort you and I are called. I believe that, internationally, nationally, spiritually, God can do for us that which is else impossible. "With God all things are possible." The same is true about all the future, about which God has given us great and mighty promises.

One lesson has been taught by the cataclysm of the nations, that God can come suddenly to his world, and there are men who have hitherto been doubtful about the speedy coming of Christ's Kingdom who have in these days witnessed to the faith; they believe that God acts by crisis as well as by process. We are told to look for some outshining of God's glory. Zechariah 8: 6 in the Greek version reads: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; if it be impossible in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be impossible in mine eyes? saith the Lord Almighty." And the promises of this Zechariah chapter will yet be fulfilled. "With God all things are possible."

The best of all examples is that God should bring his only begotten Son into the world.

Then the Spirit of the Highest
On a virgin meek came down,
And he burdened her with blessing,
And he pained her with renown,
For she bare the Lord's Anointed
For his Cross and for his Crown.

The honor was stupendous, and the message came with terror to her woman's heart; but Gabriel comforted her with the words, "No word of God shall be void of power," and she accepted the promise. And if she could believe about such a stupendous thing, we can believe whatever God is pleased to say to us. "With God nothing shall be impossible." That is the first lesson, and if only we really learn it about ourselves and our own circumstances and our own times, it will be worth a king's ransom. "With God all things are possible."

II. The Impossible Possible to Man

But, as I said at the beginning, that is the lesser of the two lessons of the text. The word "with" in the text has not the same meaning as the word "to." It is not that to God all things are possible; it is that *with* God all things are possible; and the second lesson is that with God things are possible to man that otherwise would be impossible. It is not that God can do everything, but that *with God* I can do everything. We want that established quite clearly. It is that for me, when I am with God, all things are possible; for you, when you are with God, all things are possible. Do not question that, for, if you look at it straightly, that must be the meaning. With God, alongside God, all things are possible.

The incident that the text follows up is about a rich man coming into the Kingdom: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. . . With God all things are possible." The salvation of any

man is impossible with men; the salvation of every man is possible with God. Christ tells us that the salvation of some people is more difficult than that of others, and if there be a degree of impossibility, the salvation of a man rich in this world's goods, in culture, in righteousness of his own, is more difficult than that of other men. But if God comes to that man, and he is with God, even that is possible. No man can come except the Father draw him, but if the Father draw him, then it is quite possible.

That may be more clear to us, perhaps, if we will turn to a passage in 1 Corinthians 7: 23, 24, in which the apostle talks about our daily living. "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God." Have you noticed the last two words? I have heard the verse quoted many a time with the two words left out: "therein abide *with God,*" and never move out till God moves out and you go with him.

Archbishop Benson, when he began to serve God, determined that he would never open a door for himself, yet God took that man and raised him from an obscure position to the highest position in his own church. He determined to abide where he was with God, and God led him on and on. I had a friend who was called to the highest position in his own church, who, when he became a Christian away in the mountains of Wales, made two resolutions—first, that he would never seek a place of power; and, second, if God called him he would never refuse. He never sought the high position, but God came

and called him, and raised him up also to the highest place in *his* own church.

That is how we are to serve. With God all is possible, in the future and in the present. We have to be with God, and we can be, because God comes to us by his Spirit, the Paraclete, and with God the Holy Spirit alongside, our life may be lived beautifully, nobly, truly.

There are three other incidents that come with cumulative power. The first is in Mark 9: 23. You know the incident. Christ had come down from the Mount of Transfiguration, and he met a boy possessed by a demon. The father came to Christ and said, "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." Jesus said to him, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Christ threw his words back at him. He said to the Lord full of power, "If thou canst," and the Lord echoed it, "If *thou* canst. It is not if I can; it is if thou canst." Christ cannot do things if we do not believe, but if we believe, then we are "with God."

Faith is the thing that brings us into touch with God. We are with God when we believe. God cannot do anything unless we believe, because God cannot get at us. With God, I believe, and when I believe I am touching God. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." "Without faith it is impossible to please God," but "with God"—that is, with faith—"all things are possible." In the realm of faith there is no impossibility.

I remember when I was in China, after a long

day's journey, approaching a little Chinese village, and a company of Christians came out to meet us. We went up to the hill where the village was situated, and went into the little chapel, and by the dim light of Chinese lanterns the Christians got up and told us how glad they were to see visitors from the West, for they were so small and their faith was so weak. I wondered what I could say to help them. Then I told them a story about a woman who was famed for her sanctity and her beautiful life. When people visited her town, if they were interested in divine things, they almost always went to see her. One day some one went to see her, and when he was ushered into her room he said: "I am so glad to see you; you are the woman of the strong faith." "No, sir," she replied. "But," he said, "everybody tells me what great things you have done." "No, I am the woman of the weak faith in the strong Saviour," she said.

Those Chinese friends were greatly comforted. However weak our faith, our Saviour is strong. However thin the wire may be, if the dynamo is strong the wire will carry the current. "All things are possible to him that believeth."

That is not all the story. To get the rest of it you will have to turn to the Gospel of Matthew (17: 20). You know the details. The disciples of Jesus could not cast the demon out. The crowd was gathered there; the father had come full of hope, the people had come ready to applaud the disciples; the Scribes had come to criticise; and the devil was there to hinder. The disciples, who had cast out demons

before, tried and failed. You remember the story. The disciples had failed, the father's heart was filled with anguish, the Scribes said, "We told you so!" the people sneered, the devil laughed, and the disciples were perplexed beyond measure. When Christ himself did the miracle, they went to him and said, "Why could not we cast him out?" And Jesus said to them: "Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." "With God all things are possible!"

With faith as a grain of mustard-seed nothing will be impossible unto you. It must be living faith; it need not be great faith, it may be weak faith, but it must be living faith. God is with every living grain of seed; if he were not it would not grow. God is with every grain of true faith, and it will grow because God is with it, and it is with God. God is ever working his purpose out, and my faith, however tiny it may be, if it is "with God," will be living, growing; it will be expulsive, expansive, explosive. Put it to the test, and you will find it to be true; nothing will be impossible to you. I am not to ask God to come to me to do the work; but when I am with God then I can say to the mountain, "Depart," and it will go.

This thing becomes greater when you remember what mountain it was, Mount Hermon, snow-capped, rising in majesty, the highest mountain in Syria or the Holy Land, with its great roots laying hold of

the Lebanon range; "this mountain." If he had said a little hill, it would have been something, but "this mountain!" We do not want the mountain on which Jesus Christ was transfigured to be removed; we want it to stay. But Christ was not speaking literally; he meant any great rising difficulty before the church that seems like the everlasting hills, and cannot be moved by human effort; it can be moved by the man who is with God, the man who believes; he can speak to it, and behold it will go; there will be no mountain. In that there will be no credit to the man, because every one will see he is with God; they will give the praise to God, and so will the man. Faith is not the easy acceptance of a principle or doctrine; it is a living force. Faith banishes fear, and overwhelms life with a new impulse of power. Of faith courage is born, and patience born of faith gives staying power to the life, and faith gives dignity, majesty to the soul, because faith is being with God, in touch with God, nothing else than that, nothing less than that, nothing other than that. "With God," that is faith, in touch with God.

Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And says, It shall be done.

I cannot forget a word of Thomas à Kempis, in which he says that "he that hath listened to the voice of the Eternal is freed from a multitude of opinions." Life is greatly simplified for you when you are with God. "With God all things are pos-

sible"; nothing will be impossible. This is so important that Jesus said it again in Mark (11:23). He is not now on Hermon, but on Olivet, calling his own to himself for a final word. The day before he had withered the fig-tree, and "Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away," and Jesus answered him, "Have faith in God," be with God, "for verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith." It is Olivet this time, and none of us want that mountain to go, where the prophet says the feet of Jesus shall yet stand some day. We must be delivered from literalness. The difficulty is not in the thing in front of you, but the thing inside you; Jesus says that if a man "shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe," he shall have whatever he says, but only if he is with God.

How wonderful all this is! How great and glorious it is! The difficulties that confront our lives and mock us even at our strongest, we try to climb them and get the better of them, or get round them, and we fail; the sweet simplicity of the Lord's way is that we are to be with God, and if the difficulty is really in our path Godward, we have but to speak to it and behold it will go.

I have made no reference to what our Lord said at Hermon, "This kind goeth not out save by prayer," but that must be in all our minds. What is

prayer? It is being with God. Faith is prayer, and prayer is faith, and both are to be in touch with God. Hudson Taylor said that the turning-point in his life was when he read "Have faith in God," and, turning to the margin, saw, "Have the faith of God." He found that it was the faith of God that was his resting-place. Greek scholars will remember that the word in the Greek for faith and faithfulness is the same; so he got it that it was the faithfulness of God that he was to rest on.

I do not think Hudson Taylor understood all the meaning of the text; having the faith of God means more than that; it is having the faith that comes from God, rests on God, understands God, cooperates with God. Have faith in God; keep in touch with God. Out of touch with God you will be powerless as were the disciples, as Samson was when he thought he was as at other times, and found he could not do the thing he wished. If you keep in touch with God, however weak your natural capacities may be, however small your attainment, however great the temptations, however immense your difficulties, with God nothing for you will be impossible.

Do not laugh behind the tent door, as Sarah did, do not faint in the midst of the trial, do not think that though the enemy seems to have it all his own way now he can continue; buy the land for the time of your return. Remember the mighty promise of God and believe it. Every promise is fulfilled if faith but bring the plea. Have you heard that God is coming to the earth in some way that he has never come before? Believe that nothing is impossible with

God. If the adversary taunts you, believe that you can cast him out by prayer. Take the camel and lead him up to the needle's eye, and you will find that he will go through; but he will not get through until you take him up to it. That is the trouble with most of us, we want to see that he will get through before we take him up to it, we want to see the needle's eye made big enough to let the camel through before we start. Face the mountain and speak to it, and it will go. I know what it is to speak to a mountain, a great difficulty right in front of me, and to see it dissipated like the morning mist before the sun. If it is as firm as granite you can banish it if you are "with God." Oh that we may have the faith of God that we may defy the greatest power of the enemy!

All things are possible to him
  That can in Jesus' name believe;
Lord, I no more thy name blaspheme,
  Thy truth I lovingly receive.
I can, I do believe in thee!
All things are possible to me.

The most impossible of all
  Is that I e'er from sin should cease.
Yet shall it be, I know it shall;
  Jesus, look to thy faithfulness!
If nothing is too hard for thee,
All things are possible to me.

All things are possible to God;
  To Christ, the power of God in me;
Now shed thy mighty Self abroad,
  Let *me* no longer live but thee:
Give me this hour in thee to prove
The sweet omnipotence of love.

VII

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CHRISTIAN LIVING

Our access into this grace wherein we stand.—*Romans 5: 2.*

The previous chapters have opened up the sin of man, the failure of man, and God's great way of redemption. The subject of sanctification does not begin until the sixth chapter, but we are in the region of experience in the fifth. Now there is a thing that we should all remember, and always remember, and that is that behind every great doctrine of the Bible lies an experience. If you meet with the phrase "justification," do not think it is a mere philosophic term; it is a word that is chosen by the apostle, under the guidance of the Spirit, to express something that he, in the deepest recesses of his nature, has experienced.

Our subject in this fifth chapter is Christian life and Christian living. You see, they are not quite synonymous. Of course, the whole includes the part, but sometimes we forget it. Christian life is the whole, and Christian living the part. It is Christian life that is opened to us in this chapter; it is not something exceptional or abnormal; it is not something reserved for a select few; it is not the higher Christian life; it is just Christian life; and anything that is different is something else, or something less.

What you and I want is not something exceptional; we want to know what Christian life is, and what Christian living may be, and then we want to go out recognizing the life and living it.

I. The Christian Life

If you open the chapter and read it through, the thing that I think will inevitably occur to you will be that the Christian life is an abundant thing. Again and again you have it, "Much more"; "not only so."

The first thing about the Christian life is this, the foundation thing and the crowning thing: *it is a life of God's grace.* You have that in many a verse. At the end of the chapter, in the twentieth verse, you have, "Grace did much more abound"; and in the second verse you have, "The grace wherein we stand." If you are an accurate thinker, you will see that the word "grace" is used in two senses. Grace is the thing God gives us, and grace is the effect of the thing God gives us; and the Christian life is a life of grace. A great French preacher said long ago that for the supreme moment when God meets the soul of man a new word is necessary, and the new word that has been found is "grace." A distinguished English preacher, now with the Lord, said that "the world never discovered that great word grace. It is a foreign language; it is the speech of another country; it is the speech of infinite love."

That is exactly it; "grace" is the speech of love. A love that looks up is adoration; love along the level is affection; love that descends is grace. As a

friend of mine well says, "Grace is love outloving love." That is Christian life; the Christian life is a life of grace. It begins with grace; it continues with grace; it ends with grace. My friends sometimes tell me that we are going to be awarded our place in heaven according to our works. Well, our works may be some guide to it, but when you get your glory it will be grace still. You began with grace, without any desert on your part; and you will never have any desert. What you know of God is of grace; if you learn any more it will be of grace. Because you have grace, you will get more grace. It is one of the finest arguments possible—I have often been compelled to use it before God—that if God has given me grace that is the great reason why he should give me more, else all the grace of the past will be lost, for I cannot keep on ten minutes if God refuse me grace now. If he has given me grace these years, I may plead with him to give me grace still. The man who once gets a conception of what God's grace is will find that all differences in rank and position and station will disappear. The great sinner here this morning and the respectable sinner are alike—they need grace. Some men may know more than I; some men may have a better position than I have; some men may have a greater capacity than I; but this man, and that man, and the other, all need grace. We are on the same level; and there can be no class or caste in the Christian Church when we are under grace, for grace is such a great thing that there can be no comparable difference between those who receive it. The Christian life then is a life of grace.

The next thing as you read the chapter, is that *the Christian life is a life of faith.* On God's side it is grace; on my side it is faith. "Being justified by faith." Of course, that is a necessary corollary to the other. Thank God, the only thing that can receive grace is faith. I cannot receive grace by my works, or by my experience; it must be just faith. God shows his grace, and I believe it; God gives his grace, and I accept it.

What is faith? Now you ask one of those very simple questions that are exceedingly difficult to answer. It is so difficult that in the whole of the New Testament there is no definition of faith. It is one of those axioms, a thing taken for granted. You are, indeed, told in one place what faith does; you are told what is the effect. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the proof of things not seen." That is not a definition, but a description. The only place I know of where there is an attempt at a definition is in the Apocrypha, in a very beautiful passage in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, where it says that "the love of God passeth all things for illumination, and the fear of the Lord is the beginning of his love, and faith is the beginning of cleaving unto him." You cannot better that: "Faith is the beginning of cleaving unto the Lord." Now test yourself. Have you that faith? Have you received that grace? You will never make an advance in Christian living unless you start aright. You will never be able to build your building unless you lay a true foundation. The foundation is grace, and the first course is faith.

There are two great objective realities around

which grace and faith gather. If you read the chapter you will find constantly recurring "the One," "the one Man Jesus Christ." Why, that is how grace comes to us. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The Christian life is a life that has Christ as its center and Christ as its fulfilment. "In due time Christ died." He came at the right moment. "He was raised again for our justification." It is on the fact of Christ we build. I know there are people today who say it does not matter about the historic Jesus; the great thing is Christ in the heart. Of course it is impossible for you or me to live the Christian life without believing in the historic Jesus. I believe that Jesus was born into this world, lived in this world, died here for my sin, and was raised from the dead. I have no difficulty in believing that he came into the world in an extraordinary way when I find that he went out of it in an extraordinary way. Our faith is built on the fact of Jesus Christ.

But there is another objective reality. Once in this chapter, and for the first time in this Epistle, and not again until you come to the eighth chapter, you find mention of the Holy Ghost. Here it is a sort of side issue; it is a thing that is just mentioned incidentally, in verse 5, where we read about "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." That is another fact. Christ died and rose, and the Holy Ghost has been given to us; and of course you take what is given. You must not suppose that God gives a gift which you are not expected to accept. The Holy Ghost has been given.

Let us advance still one step more, and we find two other things answering to this series of truths. Christ came to reveal God's love. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Christ came to reveal that at the center of everything there is love. That is a commonplace to you and me, because we have believed it so long, said it so often! But if it were not a commonplace it would thrill you to the marrow of your bones to think that at the center of the universe there is not only a great law but a mighty heart, that God loves, and that God is love.

I believe in the Trinity not because it is a well-ordered theological dictum, but because I need the Trinity. I need to know God, and I can only know God in Jesus by the Holy Ghost. Christian life is built there.

One of the finest women I ever met, a Unitarian, seeking peace of heart, was led to Christian faith by this verse, when it was shown to her—and I remember the look of peace that came when she believed it: "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." When I asked her the question: "How could God commend his love to us if somebody else died for us?" she saw that he who died must be the same as the God who loved. It is impossible for me to commend my love to you by another man doing something for you. If I commend *my* love *I* must do it; and if God commends his love and Christ dies, Christ and God are one, and I discover that love lies at the heart of God, and love is grace, and love is Jesus.

On my side I have faith, faith that comes by the Holy Ghost, and welcomes the Holy Ghost; and the result of that is that he sheds abroad in my heart the love of God, not my love to God, but God's love to me, so that Christian life is God's heart in my heart. That is reducing it to its last analysis, God's heart in my heart, the love out of God's heart shed abroad in mine, and remaining there by the Holy Ghost.

Oh, for a heart to love thee
More truly as I ought;
And nothing place above thee,
In word, or deed, or thought.

II. Christian Living

How can I live the Christian life? There are a great many people who never live life at all; they are just trying to live. They spend all their days trying to live. They are like a man who is going to a meeting, and finds a crowd at the door. He fights his way through the crowd, and goes home thinking he has been at the meeting, whereas he has only been fighting in the crowd outside, trying to get in. There are some people who have never learned to live the Christian life; they are only struggling to live it all the time.

What is Christian living? Well, we take the Revised version of this chapter; and I think there is not one of us but quarreled a little with the Revisers the first time we read it; but we will cease our quarrel, because, after all, they are right here, though they are not always right! "Being, therefore, justi-

fied by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "*Let us have peace with God.*" "Well," you say, "we have peace with God." But the earliest versions give it, "Let us have peace"—and I believe that is the right version, because it is the earliest. But I also believe it because I could not imagine anybody altering the phrase, "We have peace," to the other phrase, "Let us have peace"; though I could well imagine people altering the phrase, "Let us have peace" to the other, "We have peace." The difference in the original word is only the difference between a long "o" and a short "o." It is not much, but the whole of the success of Christian living is in small adjustments. You are a theologian, and you say, "We have peace." I agree; indeed, we need not quarrel about it, because it says in the chapter, in the eleventh verse, "through whom we have now received the reconciliation." It is the same thing. "We have peace." Yes, but let us have what we have; let us live while we live. "Let us have peace," and enjoy peace. Let us, being justified by faith, accept the great reconciliation once for all, accept it once for always. Let us accept it every day. Let there be no longer in my heart any distrust of God; let there be no more any dread of the future; let there be no more alienation of heart, or estrangement of life. Let me have peace with God. I would search my heart and yours, my friends, and ask you quite frankly, Have you peace with God? Have you a grudge against God for anything? Have you controversy with God on any point? If you think that God is the God of grace, how can you have anything

else but peace with him, who will do much better for you than you could do for yourself? Can you say that he has done all things well? Very humbly, I dare to say it about myself. I would have nothing different, as far as God is concerned, in all the past. He has done right. All that God has done, all that God permits, all that God demands, all that God requires, is right. "Let us have peace with God." Shall we pause a moment? Search your heart. Are you absolutely at this moment at peace with God about the past, and about all you know of the future? Yes! Thank God! Very well, go on then.

The second thing in Christian living is—again we will have to change the form of it—"*Let us rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*" (verse 2). So Christian living is a life of hope. We are not pessimists; we are optimists. We have hope of glory, hope of God's glory. God is going to be glorified in the future; he is going to be glorified in heaven; he is going to be glorified on the earth, and the will of God is to be done on earth as it is in heaven. "Let us rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." However great your blessing today, it is not sufficient unless you look forward to the great hope of the future. We all need the thought of glory. We all need to rejoice in it. Things get into proper perspective then. The things of today appear very small when we are rejoicing in the hope of the ultimate glory of God, and are quite sure we shall have our share in it; when we are able to say that, in spite of everything, we know that we shall arrive. "What time, what circuit first, I know not, but I shall arrive."

More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in heaven.

Somewhere I have come upon a hymn. I do not know who sings it, but to me it is striking. The first verse runs like this:

I'll sing the glories of the Lamb,
A hundred years today;
My eyes shall see the great I Am,
A hundred years today.

It is true, if we are in Christ. A hundred years from now all who are Christ's people now will be in his glory. How little things on earth should seem, how poor and paltry all earth's trials, in the light of a hundred years today! But, my friends, it may be next week, it may be tomorrow, it may be even today. What a fool I shall be if I make myself unhappy about anything this morning, when this evening I may be in glory. Christian living is to rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

"Yes," you say, "that is well, but there are a great many things that lie between me and that." Now, go on again. "And *let us exult—glory, rejoice—in tribulations also.*" We make a profound mistake if we think that by one step into some blessing we are going to get rid of all life's trials. We make a mistake if we think that any blessing may mean a short cut to ease. God will allow the *tribulum* to go over the grain, and separate the wheat from the chaff. We shall have tribulation. We are not made perfect through the suffering only, though there is a perfection that can only come by the great

process. But we must suffer, and tribulation will bring joy when we see that it is working for us. It works. "Tribulation worketh patience—an active patience; and patience, experience—trial, proof; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."

Right in the center of our Bible there are five books of experience—the Book of Job, the Psalms, the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. If you will take this category of Paul's about what tribulation does, and put it alongside these books of experience, you will find that the Old Testament and the New Testament experiences are very similar. You take the Book of Job. "Tribulation worketh patience." Can you describe it any better than that? You take the Psalms. "Patience worketh experience." The Psalms form the book of experience *par excellence.* "And experience worketh hope," because you know that God deals in strict equity; God rewards good and punishes evil. The man that lives for God is sure to have God's favor. You see it all in the Proverbs, where the righteous are blessed, and the wicked are condemned. "Experience worketh hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts," because you know that there is a divine order in the world. Hope brings courage. And if you go to Ecclesiastes, and find that under the sun there is nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit, yet you are courageous, because you have a hope of something eternal, something that lies behind: the final thing is love shed

abroad in our hearts, which is the Song of Songs greater than Solomon's.

There are three things more. *Let us see our safety.* We go on to verses 9 and 10. The Bishop of Durham, in all the beautiful things he has said, has never said or written a more felicitous or suggestive phrase than when, in his commentary on Romans, he translates, quite simply, without any emphasis or comment, the word which we have as "saved," as "kept safe." Nobody can dispute the accuracy of that, but nobody ever did it till he did it. You know you can always tell the difference between a wise man and a foolish man when some truth is simply said. The foolish man, when he hears something quite simple, says, "Anybody could have thought of that!" The wise man says, "What a wonder I never thought of that before!" Now it is a wonder we did not think of it before. Let me read it: "Much more being now justified by his blood, we shall be kept safe from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be kept safe by his life." That is Christian living—safe because we are kept safe; safe because Jesus Christ is round about us. Saved from the wrath, we never more come into judgment, because we are shielded and accepted in the Beloved. Saved from the temptations and difficulties of this present time because we are always encircled by the life of Jesus.

More than once I have had to argue with Christians who had long read their Bibles as to the mean-

ing of that expression "in his life." I find that some have said it means the earthly life of Jesus, that we are saved by Christ's example. Now does that commend itself to you? No! Well, I do not think it will commend itself to anybody with a spiritual instinct. We are saved by the life of Christ on earth indeed, but it is his present life, it is his heavenly life, it is the life of the Living One who died. For Christ is not the dead One: he was living before, and he is living now; and it is the life he is living now that saves, for he is the life eternal. As the apostle John says, "The eternal life was manifested, and we have seen it." We are "kept safe" because we are kept saved, not because we are strong, not because we have great will-power, not because we know the doctrine, not because we have experience, but because we are the center of his life, "kept safe by his life."

> Safe from corroding care,
> Safe from the world's temptations,
> Sin cannot harm me there.

I know a man whose guard was broken down in the presence of sin, who had the occasion presented to him to sin; and at that very moment there came between him and the sin an impassable barrier, so that he could not do the thing he would. It was the life of Jesus. You know men like that! You found it impossible to sin, not because your will was against the sin, because your will was broken; then to his child that had trusted him, who had turned the responsibility of life over to him, Christ came, and in his life saved you, tempted, tried, struggling as you

were. This is the way of deliverance; we are "kept safe in his life."

Now let us go on again. There are two things more. Christian living becomes a very wonderful thing. "Let us have peace with God"; "Let us have hope in the glory of God"; "Let us exult in tribulation also"; let us realize that we are "kept safe" in Christ's life. You come, then, to the next verse, "And not only so, but let us also joy in God through Jesus Christ our Lord." "*Let us joy in God.*" Christ sent seventy disciples out on a great embassy. They came back full of triumph because they said the devils were subject to them, and Christ said: "That is joy; but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven." That is a higher joy. But at the moment when Christ told his disciples that, he himself had the highest of all delights. "Immediately"—and Luke is the narrator—"in that hour, Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit." It is a great thing to rejoice in success in service; it is a greater thing to rejoice in the Holy Ghost, God present. It is greater than service, for it is the foundation of service; it is greater than heaven even, for it is the assurance of heaven. Rejoice in God.

In the greatest Catechism that ever was written, which is the Westminster Assembly's Catechism—there is not a Scotsman that will quarrel with that statement; and I am not a Scotsman, but I agree with you—the first question is—and you can always judge a Catechism by its first question—"What is the chief end of man?" You all know the answer: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him

for ever." Is not that splendid? The only thing that has caused any trouble is the comma in the middle which leads people to suppose that this present life is to glorify God as best you can, and when you get to heaven you are going to enjoy him for ever! It would have been a great thing if the comma had been left out: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever." And though I would not suggest an addition to the answer, really what I would like to say would be: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever, and to begin both now." Begin glorifying God now, and begin enjoying him now.

"You will be knowing something of the joy unspeakable," said Doctor Bonar to a man he was visiting. The man looked up with radiance in his face, and said: "It's more than that; it's joy unthinkable." "Let us rejoice in God."

One thing more. Do we know what it means: "Much more they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ?" *Let us reign as kings.* Christ makes us kings and priests. We are to be kings; we are to reign in life if we live the Christian life. Every man, every woman, is to be in a very real sense, under Christ, the captain of his own soul, the master of his own fate. You are not to be a slave, but to reign.

There is a chapter in Joshua—chapter 10—which is very interesting because it talks about the sun and the moon standing still. The great thing about that was not that the sun and moon stood still, but

that Joshua had enough confidence in God to command them to do it. We miss the point of things many a time! In that chapter we read about five kings who were hanged by Joshua in a grove. But the fifth of Romans is also a chapter about five kings: sin reigned, death reigned, grace reigns, Christ reigns, and I reign. If sin reigns, death is always on the throne, and I am under their feet, I am a slave. But if Christ reigns, Christ is on the throne, and I am on the throne, too. I reign in life by One, the only One, Jesus Christ, the One to whom I owe all. He makes me a king.

> 'Tis his grace his people raises,
> Over self to reign as kings.

Yes, we reign over self-interest, over self-indulgence, over touchiness, over sensitiveness. We forget self. We reign over the body. Woe be to a man if his body reigns over him! John Foster said about his body, "I will conquer it or quit it!" It was a great resolve, but let us understand how we are going to do it. You cannot quit it, and if you try yourself you cannot conquer it; but there is a way.

Christian living also means that you are to reign over your circumstances, not to be a weed on the wave, swirled here and flung yonder, but to reign over circumstances and make them subject themselves to you; not to be bitter if you are chastened, not to be desperate if you are forsaken, not to be always under the tyranny of worry and little bothers, but to have God's peace in spite of all, not to be subject to the world's fashions—not even spiritual

fashions. Be yourself, be your better self, be your new self, be yourself in Christ, as Christ is to be the Head of the new manhood. All centers round Christ. You are to reign over death, so that to you, as to Anselm, the word will come as you pass, "I appoint unto you a kingdom." For that is what Christ is doing to his church. He is calling out of the world those who are to be his rulers in his kingdom, those whom he can make kings, and say to one, "Have thou authority over five cities," and to another, "Have thou authority over ten cities." We are to reign. You a king, I a king! How is it to come about? How am I to get conquest over those things where I need victory? How am I to conquer them, press them down, tread upon them? I cannot. It must be God's way, not mine. How? "They which receive abundance of grace." Not they that get plenty of it, but they that receive the grace that is abundant—receive it, that is all.

God is eager to give his grace; his Cross proves that Love must have an outlet. Love seeks me, and I hold out my hand, and, as I take, I rise from abjectness, and stand before God a king, reigning in life by One; and that is Christian living. May God lead us into the simple and open secret!

VIII

THE DOUBLE RECKONING

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.—*Romans 6: 11.*

Bengel has a pregnant saying on the relation of sin to a saint. He says, " Sin, as plaintiff, is defeated by the advocacy of Christ, but this hinders not its continuing to act against us as defendant."

Now, we all know the difference between plaintiff and defendant. The plaintiff begins the battle, the defendant stands the assault; the plaintiff is the aggressor, he takes the offensive; the defendant acts on the defensive, and, if able, repels the attack.

In his Epistle to the Romans, Paul, by the Spirit, tells us how sin may be defeated in both ways. From the third chapter, the twenty-fourth verse, down to the end of the fifth chapter he expounds the method of victory over sin as plaintiff; those who believe in the Christ who died and rose again are justified, instantaneously and completely justified; they are set free from the curse and guilt of sin, they are triumphantly acquitted by the Judge; the Advocacy of Christ prevails; in him we die; and he that is dead is justified from sin (Rom. 6: 7, R. V.).

But sin still acts against us as defendant. Its thrall over us is gone, its power is broken, but it is still in possession. It can bring no condemning

charge against us, but we are not to rest content with this: the end God has in view in our redemption is set forth in verse six, that the body of sin might become powerless—powerless as plaintiff or as defendant, that henceforth we should not serve sin; that not only its charge against us should be defeated but that our charge against it should be successful.

We have here the method of sanctification. But it is not possible to sanctify an unjustified soul. We must learn first the method of justification, that because of his faith in Jesus Christ God reckons the believer just, apart altogether from any righteousness in himself. This was what Paul preached, and when the obvious objection was urged that if it be true, then a man may continue sinning in order to exalt the grace of God that so freely justifies the sinner, he does not withdraw or modify his statement of free grace: he adds to it the doctrine of holy living. He does not meet the objection by making justification less glorious, but by placing alongside it the fact of sanctification. This also comes to us through the death and resurrection of Christ, and the exposition of it culminates in the splendid assurance that "sin shall not have dominion over you," and this not by any return to the old method of works, but because of that very grace against which the objection was launched—"for ye are not under the law, but under grace." But let us always bear it clearly in mind that God cannot sanctify an unjustified man.

In speaking on this subject, I desire, first, to clear the ground by seeing what this text does not say: secondly, to survey the ground by seeking what it

does say: and thirdly, to use the ground by asking—What follows?

I. What this Text Does Not Say

It does not say that sin is dead. For sin, alas! is not dead. There will come a day to the world, the gladdest and fairest of all days, when it will die. The morning stars sang together when God made the worlds; how triumphant will be our songs when sin, that foul blot on God's creation, will be banished from it, when with death and hell it will be cast into the lake of fire!

There will come also to each saint the day when he will have done with sin, when he will no more be tempted, no more be grieved by it. When he will be

> Far from a world of sense and sin
> With God eternally shut in.

But that experience will not be granted to him in the flesh. Sin is not yet dead. Nothing is more dangerous in warfare than to underestimate the forces of your foe: take care that you be not defeated because you imagine that sin has lost its power; sin is not dead, it is not even weakened. *Sin is lusty,* it lusts, and is ready to spring upon you if it can only get you off your guard. The text does not say that sin is dead.

It does not say that you are to be dead. There are some yearning souls that have almost laid hold of the glorious method of living a holy life here set before us, and yet have missed it. They

imagine their personality is to die, and they endeavor persistently to reckon themselves dead; they think that to overcome sin it is necessary to take all the flavor out of life and to deny themselves its most ordinary gratifications. It is this spirit which has driven men into monasteries and women into nunneries, that inflicts self-torture, that makes people wish to be swept along in the current of God's will without any wish or volition of their own, to be, as Ignatius Loyala, the founder of the Jesuits, desired to be, "A stick in God's hands." Now, the text does not say that you are to "Reckon yourselves dead"; it says that you are to reckon yourselves dead only on one side, in order that all the forces of your life may flow in the other direction; not that you may have no will, but that your whole will may be for God, not that you should be like an impassive stick, but that you should increasingly remain a real living person. You, yourself, are not to be dead, for you are to "reckon" something, and you are to "present" something (ver. 13); whatever this means it leaves you at least a living head and a living hand. You are to reckon yourself dead indeed, but it is only to be on *that* side, in order that you may be the more really alive on *this*. The text says, "Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed *unto sin*."

It does not say that you are dead to sin. For you are not. To some sins you may be dead, to all sins you will be dead some day, from them all you will be separated by and by, but now there are sins that make an appeal to you. Different sins to different people, but in every man there is an inflammable

something which may flare up into actual fire at the touch of its appropriate temptation. It is never safe to trifle with the suggestion of evil, never safe even to parley. Sin is not dead, for daily you need to pray, "Forgive us our sins"; you are not dead to sin, for daily you need to pray, "Lead us not into temptation."

II. What the Text Does Say

Perhaps you are beginning to think that if it does not say any of the three things that have been named, it does not say anything worth mentioning; but, in reality, there is something left which, if we grasp it with our inmost soul, will give us the victory over sin in our daily life.

We are to make a great reckoning, a double reckoning. In order that sin may be dead to you, you are to reckon yourself dead to it, and in order that God may dwell in you, you are to reckon yourself alive to God. When you calculate the forces of your life, you are not to leave sin a single foothold, nor to keep back anything from God. In order that all may be for God, nothing is to be for sin. Reckon yourself dead to it, absolutely dead, wholly separated from it, having nothing more to do with it. As in Christ you died to the guilt of sin, in him also you are to reckon that you died to its power: as in Christ you live freed from its penalty, so in him you are to reckon that you are freed also from its reign. You are to reckon this, to make the arrangements of your life on this basis, to make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.

God reckons, and you are to reckon. Because the Lord Jesus died and rose again, God justifies you when you believe, that is, he reckons you just—righteous. Justification is not making a man righteous, but reckoning him righteous. Now, as God reckons me righteous who am not righteous, I reckon myself dead to sin who am not dead. God reckons, and I reckon. When I believe in Jesus Christ, God sees that ultimately I shall be righteous, that the new forces have begun to work in my life which must issue in perfect goodness; therefore he instantly accounts me as righteous; "He loves us," as Augustine says, "for what we are becoming." Now, as he reckons me righteous, I am to reckon myself dead to sin; and, for the same reason; because ultimately I shall be actually dead to sin I am to reckon myself dead to it now: in all my plans and thoughts of life I am to write sin down as a cipher.

A pattern is given to us. Lay emphasis on that word "likewise." We are to count ourselves dead and alive in the same manner as Christ died and lives. He died at a distinct moment, he was not crucified by degrees: there came a day when he was done to death, and ere evening the deed was complete. But now "he liveth unto God"—liveth always, his life knows no break, it is continuous and unending. Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead and to be alive. *Likewise.*

Do not, therefore, reckon yourselves to be partially dead to sin, nor to be gradually dying to it. If you are to get the victory over it there must come a day when, definitely, once for all, you reckon yourself to

be wholly dead to it, and dead to it for ever. "When a man dies," said a Frenchman, "it is for a long time." If a drunkard is going to be a sober man, you expect him to give up the use of alcohol completely, and at once. If a thief wants to be an honest man he must stop thieving: it will not help him if he tries to break it off gradually. If he should say that for a while he would only steal during six days instead of seven, and then for five days, and afterwards for four, your wrath would blaze forth on him, and you would vehemently demand that if he desired to be an honest man he should have done utterly with the evil thing at once. Now that is how we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin. We are not to taper it off in our lives, but because Christ died for sin once for all, we are in the same manner to sever ourselves from it, not by gradual amendment, but by one great act of renunciation definite and complete.

Then we are to reckon ourselves continuously alive to God. This is not to be the act of the moment, but the constant attitude of the life. As Christ, without any interlude, is alive to God, I too am to open out all my nature to him, and being shut off on one side from sin, I am to account myself on the other side perpetually in contact with God by his Holy Spirit. I am to reckon not only that I became alive at the moment of my new birth, but that, day by day the new life is being constantly reenforced.

For this a new power has also been given to us. "In Christ Jesus" I am both dead to sin and alive to God, and it is "in Christ Jesus" also that I am able to make the reckoning. Because I have the new

life I can reckon myself dead; and in reckoning myself alive, I use the very life for which I yearn. Paul, in writing to the Philippians, reverses the order of the two things as he gave them to the Romans: he prays there that he may know the power of Christ's resurrection in order that he may be made conformable unto his death; here he reckons himself dead that he may realize that he is alive. The one is the order of experience, the other the order of nature; but I suppose, in actual fact, the death and the life synchronize. It is only as I lay hold of Christ, and understand by faith that I am vitally united to him, that I can do either. To believe in him is to be identified with his life and his death (notice the "we also" in verse 4, and "ye also" in verse 11), and in his strength, and by his grace, which are mine in him, I am able to declare that sin, which has been defeated as plaintiff, shall not get the victory as defendant.

So you see the reckoning is to be in the power and after the pattern of Christ, a definite act as to the death of sin, and a continuous attitude as to the life of God.

But what is the meaning of "reckoning?" Let us seek an illustration. A man may fear, and yet not be a coward. "Are you afraid?" asked a young soldier of an old veteran as they were marching into the battle. With blanched lip and trembling utterance the seasoned warrior replied, "If you were half as afraid as I am you would not fight at all." But there he was with unfaltering step going forward to meet the foe. *He reckoned himself dead to*

his fear. He was not actually dead to it, but his mind and will controlled his body and drove it into the fray in spite of his terrors. "What do you do when you are afraid?" was asked of a girl who hated the darkness, who had grown too old to have a night-light when she went to bed. "Oh," she said, "I do just the same as if I wasn't afraid." She, too, reckoned herself dead to her fear. Now if I reckon myself dead to sin, I just live and act as if sin had no existence. It is there, it makes its appeal, but I reckon myself dead, and simply pass on.

Sometimes a young speaker will lead people to suppose that he is very bold; he will talk in a loud and assertive voice, and people will say he was not at all nervous. The fact probably is that he was so nervous that if he had not adopted that style he would have broken down altogether. But *he reckoned himself dead to his nervousness,* and so completely mastered it that people who do not look beneath the surface thought he had no nerves at all. In some such way we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin.

If you reckon yourself a gentleman you will not descend to mean and dirty things. Your "reckoning" will greatly affect your behavior. If I reckon myself alive to God, I will, in proportion to the reality of my reckoning, let the change it makes be seen in my daily demeanor.

This, then, is the gist of the matter. As God reckons me just, who am not just, in order to make me just, I reckon myself dead to sin, who am not dead to it, in order that I may be dead to it.

III. What Follows?

If you fulfil the exhortation of the text, *you will resist every assault of sin.* You will not let it reign in your mortal body, nor obey it in the lusts thereof. The word "therefore" in verse 12 is a hinge to join it to verse 11. When sin assails you, you will say, "I am dead to sin, therefore I *must* oppose it," and you will say, "I am alive to God, therefore I *can* oppose it." You soul will rise in revolt with the spontaneous thought, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" and afterward your memory will make the record, "So did not I because of the fear of the Lord."

You will never make any overture to sin. The effect of this "reckoning" of yours will not only extend to every assault of sin, but to every member of your body; it will keep them all free, so that you will not present any of them as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but you will present all of them as instruments of righteousness unto God. Sin cannot become *a* sin without an instrument; if you really take up this position you will not give sin any of your members to be that instrument. You will not do it because you reckon yourself dead to sin, and therefore cannot present it with anything; you will not, because you have already presented all your members to God, and you cannot take them from his hand to put them in the hand of sin.

The reckoning will become easier day by day. The sum in arithmetic that is so difficult at first afterward becomes so simple as to be automatic, and this

calculation of your life-forces becomes gradually so easy that at last it is done unconsciously. The denied sin will weary of its assaults, and the denied self will at length cease to desire to be an instrument of sin. Habit will become character.

To take an extreme instance that the working of it may be seen the clearer: A cannibal in New Guinea was converted, and of course at once he gave up his cannibal habits. You would not have approved a gradual transformation in that case, would you? Years afterwards he was asked by the missionary whether at that time the desire for a feast of human flesh ever assailed him. His answer was that the desire had entirely left him; at first the man-hunger had come with some frequency, but it awoke within him at intervals that became longer and longer until at length it entirely ceased. The reckoning became easier with the years.

But we are not to wait years before we definitely cut ourselves off from sin. As Christ died once and died quickly, we must likewise reckon ourselves to be dead. It is not occasional indulgence that will give the victory, but actual and perpetual denial. Not a partial opening of the life to God which will make us godly, but an absolute yielding of our whole nature as those that are alive from among the dead. This is the way of holiness, and in Christ Jesus the use of it will make it second nature.

A widowed mother who had one son began to understand this method of holiness. She needed to learn it, for her home was fast becoming a place of torment, though she wanted to make it, for her son,

a haven of peace. Every morning she prepared a nice breakfast for her boy, and every morning he came down so late that he only had time to scramble for some mouthfuls and rush off to his business. Now, nothing breaks a cook's heart so much as to see a good meal spoil, and nothing sours a man so much as "nagging." So the mother and son met and parted each morning in anything but an amiable mood. She felt increasingly condemned for her anger, and she saw clearly enough that she was undoing with one hand what she was trying to do with the other. Then by the Spirit of God her eyes were opened. She read this verse, and she reckoned herself dead to her sin and alive unto God. The next morning her son was late as usual, but she met him with a smile, and helped him to get off without a cross word having been spoken. The ill temper wanted to rise, but she reckoned herself dead to it and turned to God instead of to the anger. The next morning it was the same, and the next, and the next. By and by the son began to come down a bit earlier, and presently he got down to breakfast in quite good time.

"Mother," he said one day, "you are looking much happier than you used to do. How is that?"

"Why," she answered, "I saw I was spoiling everything by my temper, and I have begun to reckon myself dead to it."

"Oh, that's it," he said, as he went out; "that's it, is it?"

The next morning she ventured to remark, "My boy, you are coming down much earlier now. Why?"

For answer he just took her beaming face between his hands, and, looking love down into it, he said, "I like to come down to look into my mother's dear dead face."

Ah! there is nothing that smoothes the wrinkles out of faces like death. Death makes the old face look young in its coffin; why should it not do it also in the street? Reckon yourselves dead to sin, and people will love to look into your dead face too; they will see the light of heaven in it, for you will then be more fully alive unto God in Jesus Christ; and "when Jesus Christ is in the house," as Gurnall says, "he often looks forth at the windows."

So, though while we are in the flesh, to the evil of our heart we must say:

> The opiate balms of grace perchance may still thee,
> Deep in my nature lying;
> Yet I can scarcely hope, alas! to kill thee
> Save by the act of dying.

Nevertheless very truly and definitely, according to the pattern of the death of Christ and in the power of his life, we may likewise reckon ourselves also to be dead indeed once for all unto sin, and alive unto God for evermore.

IX

TWO LAWS AND TWO LIVES

I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see a different law in my members.—*Romans 7: 22, 23.*

There are several pitfalls in this chapter, where there are danger-signs. We must keep on the firm and solid rock as we go through. Dr. Alexander Whyte said that he always estimated any man by the way he interprets Romans 7, and he instances the case of an old woman whom he knows, over ninety years of age, who declares that she has been saved from despair a thousand times because this chapter is in the Bible.

Perhaps the things that are written here are some of those things to which the apostle Peter refers when he says, " Our beloved brother Paul hath written things hard to be understood." But while they may be difficult they are not impossible of understanding. If we remember that this Epistle was written to the Church at Rome, largely composed of slaves, and was meant to be understood by them, and if we can imagine them reading it by the light of their fires at night, after the day's work was done, with the orange glimmer on their faces, I think we may see that if they were expected to understand it, it should not be beyond us at this hour, after all our spiritual enlightenment.

In old writings, especially in old Hebrew writings,

it was the custom to give the climax of the story before detailing the processes; just as some people, when they read a story, always like to see how it ends before they begin. That is the way this chapter is written; and if we will get that fact into our minds to start with, it will help us in understanding it. But for our more prosaic Western thought, it will be better to take the process first, and then to see what conclusion we may reach. For that end I suggest that we begin not at the beginning of the chapter, but at verse 7, where the story begins. Verse 7, of chapter 7, is something like verse 1 of chapter 6. It says: "What shall we say then. Is the law sin?" while chapter 6 reads: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin?"

Saul of Tarsus was a religious, righteous man. In early life he began to study the law. He knew the law, he admired the law, and it never occurred to him that while he approved the law, the law did not approve him. But one day he made a great discovery. That is the first point. The law was energized by the Spirit of God, and as he read it over he found that he could not get through all the Commandments. He got through nine quite safely. If there had only been nine he would have got through altogether. But when he came to the tenth he could not jump it; he said he had not known coveting, had not the law said, "Thou shalt not covet." He was like the squire in the old church, who, when the Commandments were read, kept saying to himself: "Never did that. Never did that." The apostle Paul said that nine times, but when the Spirit of

God showed him his own heart, he could not say it the tenth time. He saw himself a sinner. That is a tremendous revelation.

There is an old hymn-writer, probably not known to many—Joseph Hart—who says:

> **A sinner is a sacred thing—**
> **The Holy Ghost has made him so.**

Paul was convicted of his sin. He asked the question, Is the law sin? Here was a great man who suddenly found himself to be bad. Was the law bad that showed him his evil? No. He goes on, from verse 7 to 13, to argue quite clearly that the law is holy, and the commandment righteous and good. It was Saul of Tarsus that was wrong, not the law of God; and the Spirit of God used that good law as a goad to drive Saul up to Jesus, and he kicked against the goad until by-and-by he had a great revelation of Christ, a revelation without which, in some sort, he had better never been born. He saw Jesus, he saw Jesus the Nazarene; he was a changed man, because the law showed him his sin, and drove him to Christ, who took it away.

On which I would like, in this connection, to say two things. The first is that nobody in all the world can get through more than nine of the commandments. There are some people who cannot safely get through any one of them; they fail everywhere. But never was a man born of woman, save only our Lord himself, who could go through the whole ten.

I should like to say a second thing, with which perhaps you may not at the moment agree, but you

will agree before we have finished. That is, when any person consciously meets the Lord Jesus he knows at that moment in experience, though perhaps not in doctrine, all that he can learn of God. I said you would not be likely to agree with that, but I think you will do so before we are finished. In that first moment of rapture, when your eyes see Jesus Christ, you know all he can do for you. You may not be able to phrase or describe it, but you know it.

I. The Two Laws

Another day came to the apostle when he made another discovery. He found out—it was a dreadful discovery—that the old evil of his life was not ended. He found that there were two laws within him. He goes on in the rest of this chapter, from the fourteenth verse to the end, to tell us about it. He found out that there was one law that he called the law of his mind, and another that he called the law of his members. We must not be too particular to draw a line between these two. The frontier is rather debatable, but there is no debate as to the existence of the two laws. Sometimes the law of the mind runs into the law of the members, and sometimes the law of the members runs into the law of the mind. But though you cannot draw a line quite clearly between the two, you know there are these two. You have discovered it, and if you are honest with yourself you must say it. He discovered it, and he found out that these two things were opposed to each other.

The law of his mind was in full affinity with the law of God. He said he approved the law of God, he delighted in the law of God, he wanted to do the good, and he did not want to do the evil—these four things. And he also said that the law of his members was in affinity with the law of sin. He found that evil was present with him, that he was sold under sin, that he was carnal; and the verdict that he gives at last (verse 21)—I read it in the Revised version—is "I find the law, that, to me, even to me who would do good, evil is present," in the sense that to him who would do good, evil lies in ambush ready to spring on him at some unexpected moment. That is his verdict about himself. And you will see, at the beginning of the chapter, that he is dealing with the principles, and forces, and rules that govern things. He says; "Know ye not, brethren, for I speak to them that know law"—not *the* law, but all sorts of law. He was writing to Rome, and if law was known anywhere it was known there. "I speak to them that know law." He is dealing with forces that cannot be ignored. You and I, if we are entirely honest with ourselves, know that there are two forces and tendencies within every one of us: the law of the mind, and the law of the members.

In view of this experience, what are you going to say? One of three courses is thinkable. The first is that you *deny that the law of the members exists any longer in you*, once you attain to holiness. You may deny it, you may say you are absolutely perfect. Some people have said that. I knew a man who received great blessing from the Lord, and he said

afterward that he would willingly have gone to the stake for his faith in the fact that the sin that dwelt in his nature was absolutely uprooted. In after years, one day, the sin rose and stared him in the face, and he found out, sure as he had been of his complete deliverance from the root of evil, that it was still there. It is possible to deny that the law of the members remains. If you do that, you have to say that the apostle Paul was either writing about his unconverted state—and the whole tense and tone of the writing negatives that—or you will have to say what some people have dared to say, that the apostle Paul was writing in a state of backsliding, or writing about the backsliding state; on which I would only remark that I wish none of us had ever backslidden more than the apostle Paul; I cannot believe that while Paul was dictating these glorious words to Tertius, who wrote them, his heart was away from Jesus Christ. Or you say that Paul is dealing with a state of immaturity; but that is rendered impossible by the final words of the chapter, where, summing up the whole thing, he says, "With the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." You cannot, therefore, honestly deny that there are these two laws, even in a saintly life.

Then what can you do? You may set about to strengthen the law of the mind. You want to be delivered from the law of the members. If there is conflict between them, you say, "*Let me strengthen the law of the mind.*" A great many people are doing that. Many never get beyond that. They have

the desire to conquer the members, and they say, "Strengthen the law of the mind, and then when it is strong enough it will conquer the law of the members." You can do that by way of will-power, by attendance at the means of grace, by reading, by prayer. You can strengthen the law of the mind, the law that is in affinity with the law of God. But you will neglect some part, and some day the other law will spring on you and get the better of you. And it will probably be at the place where you think you are impregnable; just as Edinburgh Castle was taken on the side where nobody thought it could have been taken. We none of us know ourselves. There are so many evils, and while we are guarding against one we are overtaken by another. In this law of the members there are many lusts. There is the lust of renown, there is the lust of power, there is the lust of riches, there is the lust of intellect, there is the lust of sex, there is the lust of pleasure, there is the lust of ease. You may guard against some of these, but you are almost certain to neglect others. Or, if you are great enough to guard against them all, and fortify your castle wall, when you get back to your throne-room, you will find one of the chief of them—Pride—sitting on the throne. A Scotch minister, on one occasion, met a man who said he had not sinned for six months. The minister said to him, "You are proud of that, I should think." The man said, "I am!" I am not going to pursue that; you will have made the application. It is evident then that the way of deliverance is not to strengthen the law of the mind. That is a

gradual process toward a desired end. Sanctification is both a process and a crisis, and it is generally taught that sanctification is a crisis first, then a process. But we may just as truly say that it is a process first, with a crisis. It comes both ways, as you will see in a moment.

A third way is open. It will not do for me to deny that these two laws are here; nor to expect deliverance by strengthening the law of the mind. Well, then, there is a third possibility. That is, *we may weaken the law of the members.* Many a man has tried that—by asceticism, by fasting, by penance, by beating his body black and blue, as the apostle says in another place. You try to weaken the law of the members, but the worst of it is that in doing so you weaken the members themselves, and then sin takes occasion and springs on these weak members and gets the better of them. My friends, sin is a very wily foe and a thing that often seizes on your members unawares. So that at last you come to where the apostle came, "O wretched man that I am!"

There are then only these three things I can do, and not one of them is effectual. I must deny that there are these two laws, or I must strengthen the law of the mind, or I must weaken the law of the members. Deliverance should come along one of these three ways. It will not come along any one of them. Then you say: "What shall I do? I am undone; I am a wretched man!" Thank God you are very nearly finding it now.

There is a hymn that John Newton wrote—

it is not in the hymn-books, and I do not suppose any of us would like to sing it:

I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith and love and every grace;
Might more of his salvation know,
And seek more earnestly his face.

'Twas he who taught me thus to pray,
And he, I trust, has answered prayer,
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favored hour
At once he'd answer my request,
And by his love's constraining power,
Subdue my sins and give me rest.

Instead of this, he made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart,
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

Yea, more, with his own hand he seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe;
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,
Blasted my gourds and laid me low.

"Lord, why is this," I trembling cried;
"Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death?"
"'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,
"I answer prayer for grace and faith."

If we could only find out the reason why the apostle came to that state, I think we might find out the remedy. I venture very humbly to state the reason. I state it without the least shadow of doubt about it—that even the apostle Paul, as does everybody who for any length of time is left on earth after the

great interview with Jesus Christ, made the mistake that the prodigal son made, in thinking that gifts of the Lord are enough without the Lord himself. You have made that mistake; I do not know who you are, but I know that about you. And I have made it. We come to Christ, and he gives us grace, and by-and-by we begin to think that grace is enough without the Christ who gave it. All through the Scripture, when you read of Christ's gift, you always read of the Giver; when you read of redemption you read of the Redeemer; when you read of salvation you read of the Saviour. The mistake we make about holiness is, that we think Jesus Christ saves us, and then that we can sanctify ourselves through the grace he gives us; and we discover that the regenerate man is no more able to cope with sin than the unregenerate man. I want to guard that statement. I do not say that the regenerate man has not more power, but I say that sin is as strong for the regenerate man as for the unregenerate man, and the thing you and I have to learn, so simple that everybody ought to know it, is this: that deliverance comes to you and me not through *law*, but through *life*. It is not by law that I am delivered, but by life.

II. The Two Lives

In this chapter there are mentioned, first of all, two laws, and next two lives; and salvation and deliverance are not by the conflict of the two laws, but by the confluence of the two lives. And the question is, rightly phrased, "*Who* shall deliver me from

the body of this death?" I cannot do it myself. No law can do it. It must be a Person who delivers. *Who* can do it?" Then I turn my eyes to Jesus, and he says: "Have you forgotten me? I met you, I justified you, I will sanctify you"; and we feel his touch, and we know the strength of his arm, and we say, "I thank God I have found deliverance." How? "Through Jesus Christ our Lord." Not through the law, but through his living power. Have we got as far as that? You are not going to do it by law, you are not going to do it by strengthening the one law against the other, or by abolishing one law in favor of the other, but Jesus Christ will do it in his inimitable and blessed way. It almost might send us to the second verse of the next chapter: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." *Life* as against *sin and death.*

But let us go to the beginning of our chapter. This is the end of the story, but being at the beginning it carries out what I said, that every man, at his first interview with Christ, knows everything he ought to know. Look at it. "I write to those of you who know law," the apostle says in the first verse, "how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth. For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth; but if the husband die she is discharged from the law of her husband." You know that beautiful, and adroit, and wonderful illustration that the apostle gives here. I used to read that illustration, and try to understand it; I consulted the commentaries

about it, and in every commentary I have read they say it is a very remarkable illustration. Then they go on to spoil their praise by saying that evidently the apostle confused or reversed the metaphor before he got through. I always felt very sorry that the apostle had not done better, according to the commentators.

If you read the chapter it certainly looks like as if there is a confusion. In the fourth verse the apostle says, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." That looks as if the apostle changed the figure, and, instead of saying, "My husband, Sin, is dead," said, either that "I was dead," or "The law was dead." But it ought to be that sin is dead. Then I turn to 2 Corinthians 5:21, and read, "He hath made him to be sin." So when Christ died, Sin died. I was bound to Sin by the law, but my husband, Sin, died, and now I am free. So when I ask, "Who shall deliver me?" I say, "Jesus has died for me, and I am set free by the body of Jesus." But I am not left a widow; I am not left alone to be assaulted by Sin at any moment. I am not delivered from my first union and liable again to be entangled. I have formed a second union. I was united to Sin, but now I am free, because Sin is dead and, thank God, I am now married to another, even to him who was raised from the dead. Who can deliver me? I take Jesus Christ, Jesus who died, and Christ who rose again, and I say, "He is my Lord."

That is the whole philosophy of it. You know how a woman is transformed, or a man, by an ardent,

whole-hearted love. When I am united to Christ the thing I could not do alone is done instantaneously by that love and union. I am his, and he is my Lord. The tie is so silken that it gives me far greater liberty than when I went alone in danger of enemies on the right hand and on the left. Now I am bold to face the whole world and all hell, since I am united to him. Since I am united to him he will never fail me, he will always be by my side; I will live with him now, and in effect he says:

> Nevermore thou needest seek me;
> I am with thee everywhere.
> Raise the stone, and thou shalt find me;
> Cleave the wood and I am there.

Even in the commonest duties of life the Lord will be by your side. The thing that was impossible to you becomes not only possible, but actual, and delightful, and heavenly, when you cease from yourself. You ring out the cry of despair, and you find he is all and more than all that you can desire.

Then, because of that, he makes the law of your members powerless. He does not eradicate sin, and he does not merely subordinate it, crushing down the law of your members. But he counteracts sin, neutralizes it, makes it non-effective; it is there, but it has no power. Not by *law*, but by *love*, by *life*.

In a great classic a well-known author tells the story of a weak wife who was very liable to be enticed away from her true allegiance by a rival of her husband. He saw the danger more than she, and he was always on the alert. He might have coerced

her, he might have laid the claims of law upon her. But he did not. Instead of that, in his own house, confronted by his adversary, he did better for her than his adversary. If his adversary brought flowers, he brought flowers still more beautiful; if his adversary made her a present he made her a present still more valuable; if his adversary gave her courtesy, he gave her courtesy more exquisite; and almost imperceptibly she was won away, scarce knowing the danger in which she stood. That wife became twice his because she was twice won. That was her second blessing. And if she had been liable to go astray a third time, there would have been a third blessing. That is quite clear, is it not? There is nothing fanatical in that; it is all beautiful, and simple, and straightforward. That is how the Lord does it. If you ask me, "Has law nothing to do with it?" I say, "Yes." "I write to those who know law." The law said that sin and I were bound together; but now sin is dead, and I am married to another, I am married to Christ, and law says that I am married to him as long as we both still live. And he is going to live for ever, and so am I.

> His for ever, only his;
> Who my Lord and me shall part?
> Ah, with what a rest of bliss
> Christ can fill the loving heart!
> Heaven and earth may fade and flee,
> First-born light in gloom decline;
> But, while God and I shall be,
> I am his, and he is mine.

He is mine for ever, ever mine!

I have just another thing to say. The day is coming when he will deliver us from this sin in our body. You are coming to that in the eighth chapter. He will by-and-by quicken your mortal body by his Spirit, and the law now in your members will disappear then. What Christ is going to do for us is this: He is going to take to glory people who sinned, but are delivered from sin, and who so hate sin that they would not sin if they could; people who know sin, and have loved sin, and been saved from sin, and hate sin, and would not sin, and who—even if the Lord said to them in heaven, "Now you may go and sin"—would say, "Lord, we would not sin for a thousand universes!"

This is the great love story of the Bible. If I asked you what was the next best love story in the Bible, what would you say? Would you choose that love story of Jacob who served seven years for Rachel? That is a beautiful idyl. Or would you say it is the story of that village maiden who, amid the glamor of a court, was true to her shepherd lover all the time? That is the story of the Song of Solomon. Those are beautiful stories. But the next best story is neither of them. The next wonderful love story is that of Hosea, in the third chapter of his prophecy. He speaks there of a woman loved of her friend, and I suggest to you today that with fine delicacy Hosea has hidden the fact that he was her friend himself. She was Hosea's wife, and though he loved her, she was unfaithful to him. And as I say that, you think of how you have been unfaithful to your Lord. Then the rival in turn was unfaithful to her and deserted

her. And you and I know how often the world for which we have deserted our Lord has been unfaithful to us. More awful than that, this man, who had ruined her life, at last tired of her, sold her as a slave, and she was in the slave-market. She had deserted her husband, she was deserted by her lover, she was sold to strangers, she was a slave. She stood in the slave-market, and I hear her say today: "O wretched woman that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Hosea, with a love akin to the Lord's and prompted by it, went down to the slave-market and bought her for fifteen pieces of silver and a homer and a half of barley. He had his sweet revenge. He bought her back, set her apart, and changed her raiment, and said unto her: "Thou shalt abide for me many days, thou shalt not be for another; so will I also be for thee." Then, after a while he brought her home. This is what the Lord says to you and me today. He wants you to clear away from sin, from your slavery, and he pays the price and brings you back, and gives you a change of raiment, and he says, "You and I for a while will be for each other here, and by-and-by, perfected and holy, you shall dwell with me for ever and ever."

X

MARRIED TO ANOTHER

Married to another.—*Romans 7: 4.*

The argument which centers round these words is one of the most adroit and daring in the Word of God. At first sight the metaphor seems to be involved. A woman is married to a husband and is bound by law to him; the only way of release from the law is by the death of her husband, for the marriage compact remains in force "until death us do part." We expect then that the apostle in the spiritual application will go on to show that the husband dies. Instead of that he appears to affirm in verse four either that it is the law that dies, or else the woman. The illustration seems to be confused or reversed. The woman is not married to the law that the law should die: if she herself die, it is the husband that is set free and not the wife. To be consistent it is required spiritually that the husband to whom the law binds her should die. How are we to explain the difficulty?

Simply by explaining away our own misconceptions.

Gurnall puts the argument in a nutshell: "By nature thou art wedded to sin, and thou must be a widow ere Christ will wed thee." That this is the key for the lock is proved by the fact that it opens it. Sin is the husband that must die and without whose

death there can be no release. This is evidently what Paul had in view all the time, and if that is the case he is more consistent than his critics and expounders.

The death of Christ is so essential to salvation, in the view of the apostle, that he loses no opportunity of insisting upon it. Listen to his argument. We are bound to sin; Christ was made sin for us, and when he died sin died so far as we are concerned. The conception is so stupendous that it stuns us to think of Christ being identified with the tyrant who held us in bondage. But this is the mystery of God, and in its presence we can but worship. In a previous passage we are taught that by the death of Christ we die to sin; here we are taught that by the death of Christ sin dies to us, and that "we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held." There is no confusion in the metaphor, we are absolutely dead to the law, we are loosed from it, not by the death of the law, nor by our own death, but by the death of sin which was our husband, which the law recognized as our husband, and which can only cease to be our husband when it dies. In the death of Christ the emancipation is complete. I am dead to the law by the body of Christ.

But the message of salvation is not that Christ sets me free from my old husband and then leaves me alone, liable again to be entangled by another unholy alliance. No, he who died for me is not dead, and recognizing that he is raised from the dead, I, who trusted the dying Christ, marry the living One, and the same law that condemned me to my first

husband now ensures my union with Christ, for I am "married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead." The illustration is wonderful, but the fact is more wonderful still. My relation to Christ is not only a union of love but a union of law. It is righteous. It is holy. And it can never be dissolved.

A true marriage is a lifelong and indissoluble union, and its mystic meaning is set forth by this same apostle in his letter to the Ephesians, where he makes it a mirror of Christ and the church. Probably if we got to the foundation of things we should discern that marriage was instituted with the chief design of setting forth the divine reality of the soul's affinity and affiance to Christ, far more than for the human joy or for the necessities of man. All through the Scripture this simile asserts itself. In the Old Testament the Lord said to his people, "I am married to you." When Christ came he called himself the Bridegroom. He said, "Can the children of the bridechamber mourn as long as the Bridegroom is with them?" And the Bible ends with the rapturous vision of the church as the Bride, the Lamb's wife: eternally we are united to him who as a Lamb died for our redemption, but as we see in our text, it is when he is raised from the dead that the benefit of the divine union flows into our souls. Our Beloved dieth no more for ever; we shall never be left to sorrow in widowhood because he is not. The Bible, the most popular of books, like most other books that are popular, ends with a marriage, and they live happily ever after.

There are some people who think this simile too bold, too sensuous. It is this feeling that has caused some editors to make Wesley's immortal hymn read "Jesus, Refuge of my soul." They are afraid to set people singing it as it was written "Jesus, *Lover* of my soul." We prefer the orginal version, for surely the Lord is the most ardent lover in the universe? It is the same spirit that alters Newton's words of adoration "Jesus my Shepherd, *Husband,* Friend," and inserts a lesser title which, while accurate, is surely not to be preferred. It is no improvement to sing "Jesus my Shepherd, Brother, Friend." There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother, that is a husband, and the Lord is such a Friend.

We need have no fear of transgressing the limits of reverence in thinking of our adorable Saviour as the Husband of our spirits. True we must tread with reverence amidst these sanctities; the place whereon we stand is holy ground, and no unchaste or shallow thought is to be permitted. We are now in the holy of holies, and we must bare our heads and take the shoes from off our feet. But all that the thought implies is ours in him. He is not only the Bridegroom of the church, he is the Husband of every human spirit that is united to him in faith by the Spirit of God. He is what each needs; he perfectly meets and fills the void in each heart, and if he be different to each, yet is he the husband of all. As Browning puts it in that wonderful poem *"A Death in the Desert"* (about which a minister once told me he did not understand the Gospel of John until he read it),

See if, for every finger of thy hands,
There be not found, that day the world shall end,
Hundreds of souls, each holding by Christ's word
That he will grow incorporate with all,
With me as Pamphylax, with him as John,
Groom for each bride!

Alas! we may not hope that all souls will share in this glorious union, but at the end the test will be whether we are Christ's or not. The deepest line of demarcation in society today is between the married and the unmarried; all the human race can be divided into these two classes, so at the last the question will be whether we are married to Christ or no. That will be the great division.

I. Think What a True Marriage Is

Not every wedding is a marriage, you know; there must be union of heart and thought and spirit as well as union of body, the whole being must be joined each to each. Man and woman are made for each other, neither can be perfect alone, and no amount of education and culture of the individual can meet the need that is only to be met by the merging of the two lives into one. Marriage, like salvation, is not a change of one but a union of two.

But this union works a change in heart and sentiment which we may seek in vain to effect any other way. If men but understood how futile it is to attempt to change themselves while they are apart from Christ, surely they would turn to him as he is freely offered to them in the gospel. Count Tolstoi describes the revolution wrought in a life of a woman

by the incoming of a new affection, which may be taken as an illustration of this.

Her whole life, hopes, desires, concentrated on this one man, whom she did not fully understand, toward whom she felt a sentiment she understood still less, inspired her with a complete and absolute indifference to her past life. It changed her former habits. Her relations whom she loved and pained by her indifference, none of them were anything more to her. The past was torn from her soul, and had given place to another existence without changing her outward life.

You see, there were no vows nor resolutions, no efforts nor self-denials, only a new life had come into her life, a new love had been evoked in her being, and the whole current of existence was altered. If such words can be literally true about a human and finite love, can we be charged with extravagance when we assert that the union of a life to Christ works a change far more definite and wonderful? O ye who have struggled long to make yourselves whole, cease from your vanity, and receive Jesus the Lord into your heart! Apart from him you can do nothing. The change for which you yearn will be wrought you know not how, the past will be torn from your soul, and you will have another existence without changing your outward life, which will be as much higher than that you yet know, as the heavens are higher than the earth. Let me repeat it, *Salvation is like marriage, not a change of one, but a union of two.* Seek not to change the soul, let the soul seek its mate. He will change the soul, its world and its outlook. All is accomplished when we

are "married to Another," and the praise is not to self but to him.

II. Remember that You Marry Him and Not His

The bride does not fix her thoughts on what the bridegroom has but what he is.

> The bride eyes not her garment,
> But her dear bridegroom's face.
> I will not gaze at glory,
> But on my King of Grace.

You might conceivably have his without him. Do not therefore seek the atonement but the Atoner, not the redemption but the Redeemer, not the salvation but the Saviour. In Scripture you will ever find that these two go together; you actually cannot have the riches of Christ without Christ himself. We are not married to grace but to the Lord Jesus.

With him you have everything your heart can desire. "Poor thing," said one about a bride who was leaving her old home for her wedding journey; "poor thing, she will be so lonely." "And were you lonely when you went on your honeymoon?" asked a bystander. "O no," she replied, "but I had my husband." Then she laughed, for she saw the mistake she had made about the bride of the day: she also had her husband, and the pain of parting from her old home was swallowed up in the joy of being with him. It is easy to give up the old life when we are to walk henceforth side by side with our Lord.

You must take him as Lord. I have no sympathy with those women who desire to erase the thought of obedience from their marriage duty. It is true

I never ask a bride to promise to obey her husband, for if she means to do so she will do it without saying anything about it, and if she does not intend to do it, the promise will make no difference. But the husband is the head, and the true wife is glad to be governed. The only way to prevent anarchy is that in the last resort the word of one must prevail, and wives are to be subject to their own husbands in everything. But remember how the thought of obedience is glorified by Christ. The husband rules because he is the head; he thinks and plans for the good of the wife, he takes the responsibility and shares the result; because of that he commands and receives a willing acquiescence from the wife. In this too we behold our relation to Christ. He is our Head. He lives and uses his wisdom all on our behalf: what he says is always best, and for those who are his, the only blessed way is the way of perfect obedience to his will.

Is this bondage? No, it is liberty. A married woman is freer than a spinster, she can do things and go to places which would be impossible did she not bear her husband's name. She does not need to be chaperoned, she is independent of everybody else because she is absolutely dependent upon her Beloved. Translate that into the spiritual realm and learn how free those are who are "married to Another, even to him who is raised from the dead." We are not indeed free, as she is not free, to do doubtful things; certainly not to do evil things, but we have a liberty which makes us truly ourselves because we are Another's.

You give that Other the right to protect you. Are you defamed? He will clear you. Are you threatened? He will defend you. Are you afraid? He will strengthen you. Are you unhappy? He will comfort you. He will answer your accusers and meet your enemies. All you have to do is to turn to him, and ask him to undertake for you.

A true wife is never ashamed of her husband. Others may not admire him, but he is the finest man in the world to her. Others may see no beauty in our Master, but to us he is the Altogether Lovely. We bear his name henceforth, and count it our highest honor. His name is not only above our own, it is over it, obliterating it for ever. We are Christians, we belong to Christ. If there be a sign by which men may know we are Christ's we are glad to display it. If by baptism, or membership in his church, or by aught else we may stand revealed, we rejoice that all the world should know. You will notice that matrons always in their photographs in some seemingly unconscious, but in an artistic (not to say artful) way manage to display the third finger of the left hand. It happens so. To them the photograph is much more approved because it manifests their marriage. That ring is always worn, it may sometimes be covered with a glove, but it is oftenest uncovered with quiet womanly pride. Shall we be less ready or less eager to honor the Life of our life. God forbid.

Our Husband pays all our debts and provides for all our needs. In sheer gratitude shall we not honor him indeed?

My guilt and wretchedness he knows
Yet takes and owns me for his spouse,
My debts he pays and sets me free,
And makes his riches o'er to me,
My filthy rags are laid aside,
He clothes me as becomes his bride,
Himself bestows my wedding-dress,
The robe of perfect righteousness.

He takes both me and my sins. My sins are my debts. "Forgive us our trespasses" is synonymous with "Forgive us our debts." He takes them, and he will pay them all, yea, all of them are paid already. Have I need of anything? He will provide it, and with unstinted hand he will dispense his gifts for my welfare. We are not poor now, since we are "married to Another," for he is ours and we are as rich as he. We bring him no honor in mourning our unworthiness. If we are his, he desires that we should live in a manner befitting the place to which he has called us. I knew a man who married his cook. When he brought her back to his home do you think she went and took her place in the kitchen as before? Would it have honored and satisfied her husband if she had still companied with the servants? Would it not have grieved him? She was now his wife, the sharer of his fortunes, and her place was at his table. Do we please Christ if after we have accepted him as our Lord we doubt whether we are his, if we continue the drudgery of former years, if we fail to rejoice in his presence and to live before all the world as those who are his very own? Do we please him? No, we degrade our high calling. Would it have been pride or humility for that

cook to have chosen the kitchen instead of the drawing-room as her proper place? Pride! Pride! True humility would say, "I am not indeed worthy to be the wife of such a husband, but since he has been pleased to make me his, his I am, and my place is at his side." Is it pride or humility for a child of God to go mourning and doubting and fearing, never resting in the love and in the presence of him who has claimed us as his own? You think perhaps that it is humility: believe me, it is one of the most awful forms of pride. To rejoice that Christ means what he says when he tells us that all his things are ours, that he wants us to dwell with him, and that he delights in us as his chosen, is humility.

You remember the story of that dusky monarch who, passing through the streets of the city saw and loved a poor girl. As Tennyson puts it—

> King Cophetua swore a royal oath:
> "This beggar maid shall be my queen."

He took her to his palace and put her on the throne. Was she a beggar or a queen after that? She had been indeed a beggar, but she was then a queen. All the difference lay in the fact that she was married to the king. And so the Church of Christ, and every member of it, becomes exalted by the fact that we are "married to Another, even to him that is raised from the dead," the King of death, and of life, and of all.

Aye! He is a King, yet he gave up his kingdom for us like more than one heir to a throne in our own day who for the love of woman has renounced

the royal heritage. Think of the proof that the King of glory has given to us of his great desire for us, and all that we might satisfy his heart.

'Twas love that sought Gethsemane,
Or Judas ne'er had found thee,
'Twas love that nailed thee to the tree,
Or iron ne'er had bound thee:
'Twas love that lived, 'twas love that died,
With endless life to bless us;
Well hast thou won thy blood-bought bride,
All hail! thou glorious Jesus.

Of course there is more, much more, that our lips may not speak. More of communion with Christ, and delight in the revelation of his heart that passes language to describe. About it all, with softened hearts, we can only say—

The love of Jesus, what it is,
None but his loved ones know.

Be thou his, and the knowledge will not be hidden from thee. And why shouldest thou not be his at this very hour?

Have you ever noticed that when husband and wife have lived long together, how like they grow to each other, so that the same features seem almost to be reproduced. The word "like" has two meanings and holds the hint in itself. Those who live with Christ, become like him: that is the only way we can be changed into his image.

His Word becomes a delight. Once a young woman received a book which with a careless glance she placed on her shelf. She thought it uninteresting. In

course of time her affections went out to a man, and she became engaged to him. She heard he had written a book, and to her surprise found that she possessed a copy. She took it down and was surprised to discover that it was the most interesting book she had ever read in her life. How she could have been so blind before astonished her; she chided herself for her folly. Every line glowed with meaning, the thoughts burnt into her heart, each word was precious. You guess the secret, do you not? Well, would you learn to love your Bible? to see its saving power? its depth of meaning? the beauty and glory of its truth? *Become engaged to the Author of it.* Be married to him.

Then prayer will be precious: it will be converse with him. Service will be sweet since it brings him some joy: you will not just do the daily task, but you will invent surprises of love and do extra things gladly. The wife will do things the servant would never dream of. If suffering come it will be welcomed for him, and if by our pain others may be brought into the Kingdom, even suffering will be a solace.

III. This Wondrous Bridal of Spirit to Spirit Is Reciprocal, Instantaneous, and Continuous

It is reciprocal. Christ gives himself to me, and I give myself to him. He takes me, and I take him. There must, of course, be knowledge and trust on both sides: some knowledge and some trust. But a mere belief about a person is not enough: belief about Christ is not enough. Everybody can believe

about your husband, but that does not make him their husband. More is needed. Suppose an English nobleman went over to Ireland, and proposed to marry an Irish peasant girl. He tells her that he has a fine castle in England, and fifty thousand pounds a year; he describes his estates, speaks of their extent and of their beauty, and then asks her to come and share all. She must believe in him ere she can consent to be his wife. She must believe. But suppose she answers: "Yes, I believe you are an English lord, that you have these fine estates and an income of fifty thousand pounds a year. I believe it all." Is that enough? Is that what he wants? No, he wants her to accept *him*, to share with him all that he has. To believe he is what he professes to be and that he has what he professes to have is nothing at all. And so with Christ. To believe he is the Son of God, that he has riches of power and of grace, is nothing. He wants you to be his as he is willing to be yours. He loves you, and if you do not yet love him, then trust him, and yield in one great act of surrender to the love that seeks you. It will not be long ere such a love will rise in your heart as you have never known before. The union is reciprocal.

It is instantaneous. The change is made in an instant. When a woman stands at the marriage altar and says the irrevocable "I WILL" to him who has said "I WILL" to her, she is married. But two things are necessary; that she should consent, and then confess her consent. The woman has the right of saying, "Yea" or "Nay"; and it is an awful

thought that it is possible for us to reject Christ. But if we consent and are willing to confess our willingness, then we are his. Whether we feel happy or not, we are his. When I sat at our wedding-breakfast I turned to my wife and asked her if she felt any difference. She answered, "No," and I replied, "Nor do I." But we were married. The absence of any change in our feelings did not unmarry us; we had publicly taken each other for ever, and nothing could undo the deed that was done. Often that thought has since comforted me. I am as much Christ's when I am unhappy as when I have the greatest joy: I should always be glad in his dear presence, but if ever the gladness vanishes I have not lost my love, *he* does not go. The union is stronger than any experience.

It is continuous. The believer is never more Christ's at one time than at another. Since the day when my wife and I joined hands we have been at times absent from each other, we have been unable to communicate with each other, at other times we have written every day, but there has never been a moment when we have been more married to each other than at any other moment. So again it is with Christ. By the mouth of Malachi he says, "He hateth putting away." The union abides.

Oh! I commend Christ to you who know him not. He waits for you. He loves you. He longs that you should be his. Wilt thou go with this Man? What is thine answer? Dost thou consent? Thy "Yes" to him will mean heaven to thee.

Oh! I commend Christ to you who know him. Is

he not fair? Does not his love grow upon you with the years? You and I have no rivalry one of the other as to which of us shall have most of Christ, for we each have him all. In heaven they marry not, nor are given in marriage, for all are "married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead," who will also raise us up, and proclaim before the universe that we are his:

Lo! if a man magnanimous and tender,
  Lo! if a woman desperate and true,
Make the irrevocable surrender,
  Show to each other what the Lord can do.

Each, as I know, a helping and a healing,
  Each to each other strangely a surprise,
Heart to the heart a mystery revealing,
  Soul to the soul in melancholy eyes.

Where wilt thou find a riving or a rending
  Able to sever them in twain again?
God hath begun and God shall be the ending,
  Safe in his bosom, and aloof from men.

. . . . . .

Well, if to her such prophecy be given,
  Strong to illuminate when sight is dim,
Then though my Lord be holy in the heaven
  How should the heavens sunder me from him?

She and her love—how dimly she has seen him,
  Dark in a dream and windy in a wraith!
I and my Lord—between me and between him
  Rises the lucent ladder of my faith.

Ay and thereon, descending and ascending,
  Suns at my side, and starry in the air,
Angels, his ministers their tasks are blending,
  Bear me the blessing, render him the prayer.

XI

MORE THAN CONQUERORS

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.—*Romans 8: 37.*

When Nelson fought his great battle off Egypt, the report was that "victory was not the name for it"—it was such a tremendous triumph. Matthew Henry says that if Paul ever rode in his triumphal chariot, it is here. This is one of the great mountain peaks, if not the highest mountain peak in the whole Bible. You rise to the sublime thought of God and glory, and the apostle was so carried away that in all the flexible Greek tongue, of which he was such a master, he could not find a word to express his meaning, so he created a new word—"more than conquerors." It is one great, complex, conglomerate, tremendous word invented to express the meaning that is inexpressible, to say the thing that is past all saying. You must experience it to know what it is—"more than conquerors!"

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, when he is describing the Christian fight, he gives a rather grim picture of the end. He says we are to fight, "and having done all, to stand," just getting through and standing at the end. But here he describes us as getting through so triumphantly that we are more than conquerors, victory is not the word for it. If I may revert to that same battle of the Nile, one of

Nelson's officers, describing the way the ships were placed, said that by all the rules of naval warfare, we ought to have been beaten. Why then were we not beaten? Because Nelson was there! And by all the rules of the campaign between us and the powers that oppose us, we weak creatures ought to be beaten. Why then are we not defeated? *Because Jesus is there.* "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

This is the climax to four questions, the conquest over ten adversaries. You can see how the apostle packed the thing tight in order to get all that in, and I am going to pack what I have to say tight, too.

I. The Climax to Four Questions

You see they begin with the word "Who?" You have it in the thirty-first verse: "Who can oppose us?"—"Who can be against us?" In the thirty-third verse, "Who can accuse us?"—"Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect?": thirty-fourth verse, "Who can condemn us?": thirty-fifth verse, "Who shall separate us?" So we stand in the center of a square, and we say: Who can oppose us? Who can accuse us? Who can condemn us? Who can separate us? And in all these things we are more than conquerors. If they oppose, we conquer. If they accuse, we conquer. If they seek to condemn, we conquer. If they try to separate, we conquer. If they do all four together, "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

The apostle gives you the provision that God gives for these four needs. We have only quoted part of

the verses. First of all, he supplies our need, thirty-second verse: "He that spared not his own Son, how shall he not with him give us all things?" Do you see the form of the language? It is not, "How *shall* he do it?" but "How shall he *not* do it?" God can find no reason for refusing us things. And if you ever doubt that God is willing to supply your need, just say, "How shall he not do it?" He cannot possibly close the way; seeing he has given Jesus Christ himself, I am certain to have all things that pertain to life and godliness. Then he not only supplies, but he justifies; and if God justifies, surely there is none to question his verdict. He not only justifies, but he satisfies. Christ more than satisfies all the need of Divine justice. He satisfies the need of the sinner's heart. It is Christ that died, that rose, is at the right hand of God and makes intercession for us; there is nothing that can arise in my life that is not satisfied there. And then he glorifies. He supplies, he justifies, he satisfies, and he glorifies. There are four questions, and God's response to them.

Have you noticed that this passage in Romans was probably prompted by a passage in Isaiah, in the fiftieth chapter, one of the great chapters in that remarkable book? In that chapter there are three questions asked, not four. In the eighth verse there are two, and in the ninth verse there is one. "He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? Let us stand together; who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold the Lord God will help me, who is he that shall condemn me?"

The apostle, I suspect, had that passage in his mind, and he rose higher than the Old Testament prophet ever could rise, and added the verse about "Who can separate?" They may oppose me, they may accuse me, they may seek to condemn me, but I have set my face like a flint, and I will go through, and nothing—neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword—shall separate me from the love of God that is in Christ. "So we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

It all depends on our union with the Lord Jesus. If you lose your experience of that union for a single day, you will find yourself condemned. You will feel that the accusing finger is pointed at you. But if you remember that he loves you, and if you abide in him, you will be able to answer those four questions with a triumphant assurance every day.

It is recorded of the Black Prince that in one of the French wars he sent to his father for reenforcements. He was not answered, and sent again, and his father returned the reply: "I am not so inexperienced a commander as not to know when reenforcements are needed, and I am not so forgetful a father as to fail to send them." We go out to fight assured of victory before we begin, but still having to fight, and we may be quite sure the Lord is on our side. He is not so inexperienced a commander as not to know when to send us reenforcements, and he is not so forgetful a Saviour as not to send them when they are needed. So here we get the climax to the four questions.

II. The Answer to the Seven Experiences

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution—there are the inward foes. Shall famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword?—there are the outward foes. Shall they separate us? Shall they vanquish us? No, in them all we are more than conquerors.

There are the inward experiences which will try us. Tribulation! It almost seems sometimes as if we had got beyond it, but none of us can escape pain. When it comes to you, you will be able to rise superior to it, and rejoice in it; and when distress of heart comes to you, there will be a peace better than the distress; and when persecution comes to you, you will be able to turn the other cheek, and to go the second mile if you are forced to go the first one. We shall be more than conquerors. See to it that you are so united to Christ that you be not defeated.

Then there are the outward things. Some of us may even be called actually to suffer the things of which the apostle speaks. Famine! I wonder is there among my readers any one who has ever been hungry. We have had an appetite, but that is not hunger. Nakedness! Peril! Sword! I know a lady who, in the midst of the Boxer troubles in China, had her head on the block and the sword was about to descend, when something happened to divert the attention of the Chinese, and they fled. To all intents and purposes the sword had fallen, she expected it to fall, and she was raised up, I believe, for the specific purpose of telling us that she never could have thought the peace of God could have

filled a human heart as it filled hers at that time. She came back from what was in fact martyrdom that she might assure us that our other beloved friends, who had passed through, were equally helped—they were more than conquerors through him that loved us.

One of the martyr stories lingers with me about a little company of believers down in Essex at the beginning of the Marian persecution. One of them was taken to be burned at the stake, and the others secretly begged him to assure them by some sign if the Lord was with him in the flame, so that if they were called to suffer, they might go the more bravely to their doom. They arranged that he was to lift his hands if he realized the Lord's presence. But they chained his hands fast, so when the fire rose he could not lift them. The others waited and there was no sign. Their hearts sank as they still waited, but when his hands were charred he lifted up the burnt stumps before he passed, eloquent witnesses to the presence of the Lord.

Whatever you and I are called to bear or to suffer, whether it is "fightings without or fears within," we may be quite sure that this thing will be true of us, if only we keep in touch with the Master and realize our union with him and lean on him and receive his grace. We shall not only get the victory, but we shall be more than conquerors. Other people will see how we are carried through, and they will say: "Naturally that man could never have done that, he could never have borne that burden, it must have been that there was Another with him.

The thing he says is true, he boasted in his Saviour, and the Saviour has been with him;" and they, too, may turn to the triumphant Lord.

III. The Triumph Over the Ten Opponents

You have the list of them. "I am persuaded that neither death nor life," the two things every one of us has to face. Before next year there will be those who will cross over the river, but we may be more than conquerors as we cross. There are a great many Christian people who, through fear of death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage. A blind Scotsman, Hugh Kennedy, of Ayr, when he was dying, asked those about him to put his finger upon these words, and when he was quite sure they were there, he said, "My children, I have breakfasted with you, but I am going to sup with the Lord Jesus tonight." He was quite sure that he was going to be more than conqueror through Him that loved us.

A friend of mine in Lancashire, in a beautiful collection of water-color paintings, one of the finest in the country, has a great canvas in the middle representing the death of Zubaran, the Spanish painter. Though he was not a monk, he died in a monastery, and the picture represents him with the monks round about him, and one or two other friends, weeping because they loved him. At last they said, "He is gone." But he rose on his elbow, and said, "No, give me a piece of charcoal." And taking it, on the white monastery wall the dying man drew the picture of the thorn-crowned Jesus,

and then fell back to go to be with him. His last thought was of Jesus. Oh, it is a great thing to think that the Lord will be near to us when we come to pass over the river. Mrs. Booth told a story about a saint of God who was passing, and they brought to him some legal paper he had to sign, held it up before him, and helped his hand on to the paper in the hope that he might sign it; his pen ran along the sheet, and he was gone; when they looked at it, he had signed "Jesus." Oh, if we could only get taken up with the Lord Jesus like that, why, nothing could vanquish us. We should always be more than conquerors.

But then life is a puzzle as well as death. I can trust the Lord for death, but what about this tangle of the problems of life? The great things I leave to him, but sometimes our little burdens are our greatest bothers—what am I to do with them? We trust Jesus Christ for the spiritual things, but we cannot trust him for the ordinary things of life. I had a lesson during the war about that. I live on Champion Hill, and my nearest railway station is Denmark Hill. In the first years of the war, I had a first-class season ticket, which took me into the City of London. But from the same station there is a line that goes to the West End of London; occasionally I had to go there, and I used to buy a special ticket. I traveled third-class, ignorant all the time that the railway companies had agreed that during the course of the war the season ticket to the city would also be available to Victoria. The ticket I had in my pocket would have taken me there without

extra charge, and it would have taken me first-class instead of third-class, and I was foolish enough on these occasions to buy a third-class special ticket. Some of us are actually like that; we begin in the Spirit and we seek to be made perfect in the flesh. We trust Jesus to save us from hell, and we will not trust him to save us from sin; we trust him to be with us in death, and we will not trust him to be with us in life. If we only put him to the test our conquest would be as complete as the victory of Vittoria in the Peninsular War. An English officer wrote of the enemy: "We beat them before the town, and we beat them into the town, and we beat them in the town, and we beat them through the town, and we beat them out of the town, and we beat them behind the town, and we beat them all round about the town." They were more than conquerors.

What a triumphant life ours is! What a glorious Leader is ours! He loves us and he is with us, and all power is his in heaven and in earth. We need not be afraid of the unseen world; neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers, can harm us if Christ is with us. We need not fear the course of the ages, nor things present, nor things to come. A man once urged that sin might separate us, but I said to him: "My dear fellow, surely sin is a thing present, and if I am not wrong, it will be a thing to come—and neither things present nor things to come shall separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus." Once when I was a minister in Leicester, I was called to see a woman dying of con-

sumption who was greatly troubled, even though she confessed faith in Christ. Her mother was moving about the room, and I did not get at the trouble in her heart until her mother went out. Then I quietly suggested that there was something that bothered her, and she opened her mind and said, "Yes, I believe Jesus has pardoned my sins, but though I lie here, I keep on sinning, and I want to know if the sins of today will undo the pardon of yesterday, and the sins of tomorrow undo the pardon of today." I said something quite simple to her, and she almost jumped out of her bed. "I never heard that before," she said. She had heard it, but it had not entered her heart. She said: "I wish I could live to tell everybody that. Why did not somebody tell me that before?" Her trouble was lest the sin of the future should separate her from the union of today. What I said to her was, "When Jesus died for your sin that was all future, he died for all your future sin." Is not that gloriously true?

> Here's pardon for transgressions past,
> It matters not how deep their cast;
> And, oh, my soul, with wonder view,
> For sins to come, here's pardon too.

Then again no imagination can separate you; no height or depth or new creation, discovered or undiscovered, made or yet to be created, can separate you. It will be with us as it was with Samuel Rutherford, when he came to the end: "Now I have got the victory, and Christ my Saviour, his arms to embrace me." So for living and for dying, for earth and for

heaven, for sacred things and for common things, for today or tomorrow, for the life that will end in death or the life that will end at the glorious Epiphany, "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

XII

CONTRADICTORY EXPERIENCES

Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his Servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.

Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.—*Isaiah 50: 10, 11.*

It is needless to argue that these two verses refer to two different classes of people—the one to those who fear the Lord and obey the voice of his Servant; the other to those who do not fear to disobey; the one to the children of light, and the other to the children of darkness. That is obvious.

But the remarkable thing is that the children of light are set before us as walking in darkness, and the children of darkness as walking in light. These contradictory experiences, these paradoxes of the Christian life, are the subject of our discourse.

I. The Children of Light Walking in Darkness

This is not an uncommon, but it should be an exceptional experience. Not all God's people are in the shadow: it is only some among them. Yet even in the prophet's days there were such eclipsed souls.

Indeed, it is probably true that all God's people sometimes are in darkness; some oftener than others, and a few seem to have it as their normal experience. In the midst of the world cataclysm, a great number of believing souls were without the light; and it is well to remind ourselves that in all the ages some of God's choicest saints have known what it is to have God's countenance hid from them.

A lady sat under my ministry for years, who in her life gave every evidence of being one of God's children; she was devout, generous, interested in God's work, constantly reading good books, and yet she could never believe that she was amongst the number of God's chosen. Time and again I got her into a corner, as I prayed and talked with her, and thought she could not escape, but she always slipped out and away. With desperate ingenuity she turned every promise away from herself, and she died as she had lived—in the dark. But I have no doubt she went straight to the Lord whom she had served for half a century without knowing it.

Though this is a bewildering, it need not be a blameworthy, experience. Of course, it may be blameworthy. The darkness that envelops the child of God may be the result of permitted sin, of carelessness, of worldliness, of broken fellowship with God. In that case the only hope is to go back to the place where we got wrong, and anew follow the Lord's will. But often the darkness comes apart from failure. Then it is good to remember that others have been this way before us, and that they have come triumphantly out into the light, when

God's purpose in the darkness had been accomplished. It is sometimes possible to trace the reason for the shadowing of life. It may be a past fault or sorrow which pursues the soul into the present, or some discipline or Providence today which obscures the sun. It may be some warped humility of disposition, some nervous shrinking from the future, some twisted sense of values, that robs the soul of light. If these things were recognized, it would go a long way to rob the darkness of its terror.

Better yet, the very darkness may be to prepare us for some future service. Just as we put our bulbs in the cellar to make them take root for early flowering, God may put us into the darkness to make us the more steadfast in our future praise; perhaps to make us cling to him the closer now, as was the case with a father who kept taking his child into a dark room because she held to him tighter there.

Mr. Spurgeon once had a week of great depression, and although he searched his spirit, he could find nothing against himself. Yet he was unable to rejoice in God. When Sunday came, he preached, as he always did, out of his own experience, and the only text which suited it was, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" After he had poured out his heart in his discourse, he sat in his vestry, when a man came running into it, and said: "How could you preach a sermon like that? I have been in despair for years, and you have brought me into liberty." Then Spurgeon knew the meaning of his own darkness. A week's depression was a cheap price for the ending of years of despair. If God

allows his saints to walk in the darkness in order to bring others out of it, that, instead of bringing them into condemnation even before the tribunal of their own hearts, should be looked upon as a mark of favor. They would not be tested if they were not trusted.

II. The Children of Darkness Walking in Light

These verses cannot be rightly understood apart from each other. Here is the second paradox; and from it we may learn that the human heart longs for light. If it shuts out the light of heaven, it will seek to create light for itself. Like dwellers in the Arctic night, those who forsake God seek to dispel the darkness that ensues by gathering faggots and building a fire. As the prophet sees them, he pours scorn on their efforts; and, with an irony that bites deep, he urges them to walk in the light of their self-kindled flame, to delight themselves in the rising sparks, for soon the sparks will be quenched, the fire will die; and the darkness will be the denser because of the previous light.

This is the picture of all worldly life, of all the pleasures of the world, which flare up for a while, and speedily burn out; of all the pomps of the world, with their glitter and glamor; of all the philosophies of the world, with their passing splendor; of all the philanthropies of the world, with their sense of failure and recurring need. Man-made, self-kindled, these things but mock the soul's desire, and give not light enough for human life.

It is also true of all merely human religion. If a

man leaves God's way, he does not cease to have a religion; and while, of course, all light originally comes from the sun, there is a tremendous difference between the light of a fire and the shining of the day. During the last forty years I have seen many a fire kindled and die down; and when a new cult arises today I am not so greatly concerned, for I know what happened to the others. For a little while men rejoice in their light, but the light soon fails. The only sorrow is when the children of God are so deceived as to choose the light that is earthly and human for the light that is divine and heavenly: when those who have rejoiced in the sunshine turn aside to the world's fire.

The children of darkness end in darkness. "This shall ye have of mine hand," saith the Lord, "ye shall lie down in sorrow"—the blackness of darkness for ever. But what is the destiny of the children of light who walk in darkness now? We are not told by the prophet—we do not need to be told—inevitably they reach the light.

III. What of God's Children Meanwhile?

We turn back to the first verse, and we find that there are four things possible for them. Let us see if they are true of us.

Two things are already sure. They fear God: though he hide himself, they believe that he is, and their souls bow in reverence before him. This is the beginning of wisdom. Then, they obey the voice of his Servant. Who is God's Servant, if not that Figure that rises on these prophetic pages, at first

dim and shadowy, but becoming clearer and more definite as we advance, until on the front page of the New Testament we read, "His Name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins"? This is he, and we believe and obey him. Yet it may be that we walk in darkness. What then?

There are two things more. The first is to trust in the Name of the Lord. Now, the name of any person is to me all that I know of that person. My name means different things to different people, according to their knowledge of me. The Name of the Lord is all that I know of the Lord. I can trust in that. The Name of the Lord includes all Bible story; all the experiences of the early church, of the martyrs, of the millions since redeemed; all my own experience of his delivering grace. Though the light be withheld, I have the Name, and I trust in the Name. When the darkness comes, I am not to turn back, not to go aside, not to sit down. I walk on, being assured that the Lord is still true, and that beyond the shadows is the light. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death"—and there are many of us walking there these days—"I will fear no evil, for thou art with me."

This is Moody's chapter. Before he started on his great career, he sought a message from God, and it came to him in the words of the seventh verse: "The Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." He stayed upon his God, and found God true.

This is Paul's chapter. In that New Testament

mountain-summit at the end of the eighth chapter of Romans, he is evidently repeating the thought of this ancient prophecy. He asks: "Who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemneth? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" He but echoes the prophet's challenges in verses eight and nine: "Who will contend with me? Who is he that shall condemn me?" Paul stayed upon his God and found him true.

But here is a greater than Moody or Paul. Jesus is here. Of whom, save our Lord, can the words be true: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting"? The darkness came over him, but he stayed upon God and found him true; for when he uttered the words of extremest agony, "My God, why?" (even he did not then know why), in that hour of darkness the angels were tuning their harps for his coronation anthem.

The question for me is: Am I in this chapter? am I so fully persuaded of God's promised help, that no darkness can turn me from his way, no shadow shake my faith in his Word? The martyr I admire the most is Robert Glover. He was condemned to die for his witness to Christ, and yet it seemed as if Christ had forsaken him. Others, condemned with him, sang songs of triumph; they realized the Master's presence and smile, but Robert Glover was in darkness. Yet he was ready to die for the Lord in whom he had trusted, even though the Lord hid his face from him. He never dreamt of being rec-

reant. The day came when they all went forth to their doom: the others with the seal of their Saviour's joy; he, none the less steadfast, but in darkness of soul. That was the true martyr-spirit. Brave Austen Berner, the Switzer, who comforted so many of God's servants, walked by his side seeking to comfort him. But in vain. It needed more than man's word to bring light to his heart. But as they drew near to the place where they were to be burned, Robert Glover paused on his step, and said: "Austen! He's come! He's come!" and Austen saw on his face that which assured him that there was a light in his heart, brighter than the fire that was presently to send him to his Lord.

Let the saint who is in darkness, therefore, never think to gain the light by human device or skill. Those fires will fail. But let him walk steadfastly forward, and sooner or later the child of light will come to the light, and will be able to bless the Lord, even for the shadows.

XIII

BETHEL, PENIEL, ISRAEL

He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us; even the Lord God of hosts; the Lord is his memorial. Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually. —*Hosea 12: 3-6.*

That is the Authorized version. The Revised version has a very remarkable change in the third verse; not "by his strength," which, we shall see in a moment, must be quite wrong, but "In his manhood he had power with God."

God was round about Jacob in his infancy, for there was a portent at his birth that gave him his name—the Supplanter. Every man, when he is twice born, can look back to his earliest birth, and say, "God was there . . . when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me, by his grace, to reveal his Son in me." God does not begin with you when you begin with God; he begins with you at your very earliest moment.

In his youth, Jacob grew up a schemer, a trickster. He was always planning, and he had that duplicity which inevitably accompanies a weak nature.

But in his manhood he had power with God. His manhood came suddenly, as manhood always does.

Old age always comes suddenly too; you do not grow into old age; you just discover one morning that you are an old man. In the same way manhood, which is not to be reckoned by years, comes suddenly. Many a young fellow, eighteen years of age, in the war became a man in three days.

Jacob, at his birth, took his brother by the heel; in his youth he took his brother by the throat; but in his manhood he took his brother by the hand, and he ceased to cozen and cheat any more.

How did Jacob come to that? First of all, he got to know God, and then he learned the lesson of prevailing with God.

I. He Knew God

He came to know God at Bethel. "He found him in Bethel," Hosea tells us. The place was called Bethel because Jacob met God there. At first it was called Luz, but it became "God's house" because there Jacob realized that God was near. There are many Bethels in the world. Every spot is hallowed ground to the man who seeks God; no place is hallowed to the man who has not eyes to see. I have lain down at Bethel near the spot where Jacob lay, where there are ridges of rock running away to the east, and as you lie you can very well imagine that these rocky ridges form a kind of ladder going across the Jordan Valley to the hills of Moab; it is quite possible that as Jacob lay down there, his last sight of the country suggested the dream to him. Often it is in the outward and simple things that we see God. In his sleep he saw a ladder reaching to

the skies, and the place became to him a house of God, a gate of heaven. God has many houses, and heaven has many gates. Wherever we find ourselves we may be sure that we can find God.

Years ago a man who in his poverty spent his nights on the Thames Embankment, wrote great thoughts on such scraps of paper as he could find: he had the vision of God, and has recorded it in memorable words. Francis Thompson's words ring true:

> And when so sad thou can'st not sadder
> Cry! and on thy so sore loss
> Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder,
> Pitched between heaven and Charing Cross.

The city called Luz at the first became a Bethel, and there Jacob first came into acquaintance with God. He believed in the unseen. You and I, all of us, I have no doubt, believe in the unseen. What wonders there are round about us if our eyes were but open! There are colors in nature that these eyes have never realized; there are sounds in nature that these dull ears cannot hear, music that has never touched the tympanum of any human ear. There are unseen intelligencies round about us—God's angels. Jacob saw them descending and ascending. The ladder reached to heaven, and Jacob realized it. But, you know, to a disappointed, broken-hearted man, though angels may be very welcome, they cannot satisfy his need. Jacob must get to know God.

God spoke to him at Bethel, and God may speak that word to you and me, and may speak it in a

clearer way than ever it came to the patriarch. I turn to Genesis 28:15: "Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land: for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Not only to Jacob, but to you and me he speaks it. If his voice comes like that, and if we realize that the Lord is never going to leave us till the last jot and iota of his promise is fulfilled, we shall go out strong. Ibsen, the Norwegian writer, describes two travelers who are about to scale a precipice: the villagers try to dissuade them from the perilous attempt, but they go on and cry back as they advance, "There is no precipice too steep for two." And if my Lord and I go together, there is no difficulty in life that can baffle us; there is no precipice too steep for two, if he be the other.

Bethel became Jacob's memorial. He made his pillow into a pillar. He might forget his dream, but when he came back he could not deny the pillar. The vision might be dim, but the pillar was definite. It is a great thing to put something up, something material and outward, so that when the spiritual thing grows dim you may say, "At least, it was there, and it was thus that I met with God."

But though Jacob had met God he still lived a life without power. When he went to Laban he was the same sort of man, still a trickster. And in Laban he found a foeman worthy of his steel. Jacob was a fit father for the Jews as we know them today, but Laban was almost equal to Jacob. Jacob continued scheming, and planning, and trying to get the better

of Laban. He had not got away from his own self-working. He prospered, but he got careless. Idolatry came into his family; he loved Rachael, but he let her worship other gods. The day came when he was going away, and he told Laban he had served him well, that in the day the drought had consumed him, and the frost by night; and yet, in spite of all the trickery, Laban said he had learned by experience that God had blessed him for Jacob's sake. Jacob was really a good man, in spite of his cunning and his policy, but he had not yet got deliverance from himself. He had just come to Bethel, but there was something else that he needed.

II. He Prevailed with God

There was another place he had to reach, and he came to it on his return journey. He had to meet his past. We read about it in this Hosea passage: "Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him." He came to Peniel by the brook Jabbok, and there he was compelled to meet his past. We shall have to meet our past, as Jacob met Esau, the man he had tricked and cheated. He had not even then stopped his scheming; he was still Jacob the schemer and supplanter. He schemed to placate Esau by sending forward presents. But he was not satisfied. He was oppressed by great fear. He went out alone to meditate, to try and plan it out a bit further, and then he came into close grips with God.

There is never any good done until you get into close grips with God, as Jacob did. I can fancy

how he battled with his fears, and dreaded, and wondered. Then as he was striving in prayer there came to him a man who challenged him to wrestle. Every shepherd is a wrestler. Jacob had been wrestling with his fears. It would be easier to wrestle with a man, so they fell to in the darkness, and he found that this man was a better wrestler than he had fancied, he knew pressures and passes and tricks of wrestling, and Jacob could not prevail. They fought, and fought, but still Jacob could not prevail. Then it dawned upon him that this man was not putting forth his whole strength; that this was some special, some extraordinary visitant. And the sweat came out upon his brow, and the night passed, and the sun was rising, and the light of morning was on the land. The sun rose over the hills of Moab, the shadows were long on the ground, and Jacob began to think he was wrestling with God.

You and I know that we can get into touch with God as Man in a fuller way than ever Jacob imagined. Jacob was wrestling with "a man," and this "man" was God, and he scarce knew what to do. This "man" reached out his hand—no, it was not a man's hand; it was God's finger—and touched Jacob's sinew, and the sinew shrank, and Jacob's wrestling was over, and Jacob, the supplanter, who had become Jacob the wrestler, became Jacob the clinger. He could do nothing else but cling, and now he was getting the victory. It was not by his strength that he prevailed. The old version of Hosea cannot be correct, that "by his strength he had

power with God." When he was strong he had no power with God, nor power with man. But in his weakness he had power with God. His sinew was touched, and he gripped tight and clave to God.

Have you got as far as that yet? Hitherto you have perhaps been strong, you resolved to do great things, your intelligence was keen, you were able to reason things out, but now you find that you cannot; you are disappointed. Like Jacob you may come to strong supplication and tears as Hosea tells us, not tears before your fellows but tears of the heart which are the most efficacious. Jacob in his weakness clung to God, and then he prevailed.

The angel said to him, the angel of the covenant, the blessed Lord himself: "Let me go, for the day breaketh." Did he want to go? No; he wanted to stay. You know sometimes when you are in a house, and you are not quite sure you are welcome, you rise up to make as if you are going, just to know whether your host wants you to stay or not. The angel wanted to stay, but he said, "Let me go." He desired to know whether Jacob was in earnest, and in the urgency of the moment, he answered, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me;" he clung to the heavenly Visitant, confident in self-despair, as Wesley tells us. There is no better comment on this passage anywhere than in the great hymn from which the phrase is taken. The whole of it is in no hymn-book.

> Come, O thou Traveler unknown,
> Whom still I hold but cannot see;
> My company before has gone,

> And I am left alone with thee;
> With thee all night I mean to stay,
> And wrestle to the break of day.

Here is another verse of it:

> Yield to me now, for I am weak;
> But confident in self-despair;
> Speak to my heart, in blessing speak,
> Be conquered by my instant prayer:
> Speak, or thou never hence shalt move,
> And tell me if thy name is Love.

That is it. When we become "confident in self-despair," holding on to God, we are on the verge of conquest. "Confident in self-despair!" And here is a verse that gives the end of the matter:

> My prayer hath power with God—the grace
> Unspeakable I now receive,
> Through faith I see thee face to face,
> I see thee face to face and live;
> In vain I have not wept and strove—
> Thy nature and thy name is Love.

I am hastening through, because I realize that this blessing does not come by multitude of words, but by the voice of God deep down in the soul. "He had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us." *With us!* Underline it, encircle it, mark it in red, put it in gold, translate the great principle underlying it. The angel spake to Jacob, and Hosea hundreds of years afterward said, "He spake with us." The Word of God to any saint is the Word of God to every saint, if it is a word about eternal things. "There he spake

with *us!*" The Lord Jesus himself gave us a warrant for that method of interpretation in Matthew 22: 31, 32: "Have ye not read that which was spoken unto *you* by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Originally it was not spoken to those people at all; it was spoken to Moses beside the burning bush. But the Lord Jesus takes that word, and says it is spoken to *you.* And so the word to Moses is a word to me. And the word to Jacob is a word to me. We hear God speaking today through these living oracles.

Listen to what the prophet adds to it: "Therefore turn thou to thy God." That is the first thing. The second thing is this: "Keep mercy and judgment." The third thing is, "Wait on thy God continually." "Turn thou to thy God"—*Bethel,* God's house. "Wait on thy God continually"—*Peniel,* God's face. "Keep mercy and judgment"—*Israel,* God's Prince. Turn thou to God, get to your Bethel; learn of his mercy and judgment, get to your Peniel, and wait always on God, because you are Israel. God's house, God's face, God's prince!

Are you leaving home, are you all alone, have your friends forsaken you, are you in the midst of disappointments, like Jacob? Go to Bethel. Get to know God. I knew an illiterate man who preached in a country town, where they built him a mission hall. When he died, a sob went through the town, and when the funeral was going by, one working man said to another, "He was very thick with God Almighty." Most desirable epitaph!

Then "wait on God continually." You turn to God and get to know him: but that is not enough. Go to Peniel, wait on God in your weakness, and not in your strength. Cling to him; be like Jacob; confident in self-despair, you will end by saying that the Sun of Righteousness has risen upon you, and the morning has come with gladness. In your manhood or your womanhood you will put away childish things, being no more infants to be pampered. You will be men and women in Christ able to endure hardship; you will realize that your manhood and womanhood are in touch with God's power and you will go out with God and be able to do exploits. Like Moses, you will be able to speak to the sea, and it will roll back; like Joshua, you will be able to command the sun and moon to cease their shining; like the Syrophenician woman, you will cling until you get your request, and will not be denied. You will be able to say to the mountain, "Be thou removed." In your manhood and womanhood you will have power with God.

Bear with me a minute or two more. Once I went to a great convocation of people, and on the first evening was unable to enter the tent where the meetings were held, the crowd was so great. I stood four minutes at the tent door. I have not the remotest idea of what the speaker said, but the subject was Jacob, and as I listened for those minutes God smote me on the face, and I said, "I am Jacob." And there, I came to my Peniel; and on the hillside I wrestled until in my weakness I came to a new manhood.

If I might tell another thing. On one of the occasions on which I was Doctor Barnardo's guest, he was urgently in want of money for his orphan homes. He had prayed that morning at the family altar, and I had knelt with him, asking God to supply the need. When we got to the Boys' Home in Stepney Causeway, there was a lady waiting who gave him three separate thousand-pound notes, dropping them into his hat, with appropriate remarks each time. I had never seen notes for a thousand pounds before. She would not tell him her name, and she was gone almost before he could thank her. My friend Manton Smith, and myself, and Doctor Barnardo went into the little retiring-room, and, with strong crying and tears, that man, so greatly used, whose memorial will endure as long as the world lasts, poured out his soul to God, and his confession was that he was like Jacob, often trusting in his own plans, and he begged to be delivered. It is a memory almost too sacred even for these brief words; but we, too, need to throw ourselves upon our knees with a similar confession and prayer, and the same response will surely come to each of us, and we shall henceforth be men as Christ.

Show me thy face—one transient gleam
  Of loveliness Divine,
And I shall never think or dream
  Of other love save thine;
My life shall seem a trance, a dream,
  And all I fear and see
Illusive, visionary—thou
  The One Reality!

XIV

OUR CROSS AND CHRIST'S YOKE

Let him take up his cross daily.—*Luke 9: 23.*
Take my yoke upon you.—*Matthew 11: 29.*

Jesus Christ is the Gift of God, and the first thing in the Christian life, viewed from our side, is that we should receive what God gives. God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son; when I believe the love that God hath to me, I take as my Saviour the Gift he has given. Nothing can come before that. No man is a Christian who has not received Christ.

But when we receive Christ there are two things we are to receive from Christ. He desires to give us both of them, and the blessedness and usefulness of our life are largely dependent on whether we take them or not.

I. Our Cross

The first is spoken of in the ninth chapter of the Gospel according to Luke. "*He said to them all*"—this is a message therefore to every disciple—"*If any man will come after me*—if any man wishes to come after me, willeth to come after me, is determined to come after me—*let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*"

We see then that we cannot follow Christ unless we deny ourselves. A man can no more follow Christ

and himself at the same time than he can go up the road and down the road at the same time. The one way is diametrically opposite to the other, both cannot be pursued at once. Having received Christ as my Saviour and Lord, and having the necessity laid upon me of following him, the initial thing is that I should deny myself. What does that imply? Does self-denial mean only that I shall keep myself ordinarily within bounds, that I should cut off the excrescences of my nature, and renounce some of the pleasures of life? Civilization would lead me as far as that, morality would teach me as much; surely Christ would have me go higher! Is it then that I am to think humbly of myself? Why is it the man who is always trying to be humble that never forgets himself? The apostle Paul, in the Colossian letter, warns us, "Let no man beguile you in a voluntary humility," and sometimes the proudest people in the world are those that are proudly humble. Christ does not want us to think humbly of ourselves, he wants us not to think of ourselves at all. That is what he teaches us here. To deny self is to act toward self as Peter acted toward his Master when he denied him: he said "I know not the man," and for the moment he lived as if he did not know him, as if there were no Christ. When you and I learn to deny self, we shall live as if there were no self, we shall never do anything of which self is the center and aim. Never anything. Self may sometimes be gratified, but when we follow Christ no act will be done simply to please ourselves. Is this a hard lesson? Is it difficult to attain to such a standard?

The perfect way is hard to flesh;
It is not hard to love;
If thou wert sick for want of God,
How swiftly would'st thou move.

Further, we cannot follow the Christ of Calvary any other way than by the way of the cross. The fathers of the church were accustomed to say that the way of Christ was not the *via lucis* but the *via crucis;* not the way of light, but the way of the cross. We might more truly say that the way of Christ is both *via lucis* and *via crucis,* and it is the way of light because it is the way of the cross.

Apart from thee, all gain is loss,
All labor vainly done;
The solemn shadow of thy cross,
Is better than the sun.

When one of those old monks lay dying he said something which may set this forth, and we are glad enough to get a Protestant truth even from the lips of a monk. He asked his brother monks to sweep the stone floor of his cell. When they had done it he said, "Now make on the floor a great cross with the ashes of the fire." Then he demanded to be laid upon the cross of ashes on the stone floor, and in a rapture he said, "My own works sink me like lead in the waters, but that which is now beneath me is buoyant, I rise, I rise"; after an interval he uttered the word "Jesus" and so he passed over. What he said superstitiously you and I may say without a trace of superstition. This old self of ours is like lead to sink us in the waters, but the cross which

Jesus gives us will be beneath us buoyant, and by it we may rise to some purer ether, some diviner air. No man trusting in the Christ of Calvary can follow him without a cross; his cross is sufficient to atone for our sins, it needs no cross of ours to accomplish that mystery, but the likeness of Christ is wrought by the Spirit only through the discipline of life. We must carry our cross.

My third remark is that we are none the worse for that. It is true that every Christian has a cross, but it is not true that Christians are the only people with crosses. Every man has a cross whether he is a Christian or not. As I read the New Testament I do not find that Christ came to a world where there were no crosses in order to give them to those who accepted him. If you seek to follow him you will have a cross. Very well: but you have a cross whether you seek to follow him or not. Everybody has a cross, so a man who becomes a Christian is none the worse in that respect for his faith. The world says to its votaries, "Forsake all and follow me, and I will give you nothing, neither in this life, nor in the world to come." The call of Christ begins in like manner, "Forsake all and follow me"; in that Christ and the world make equal claims, but he adds, "you shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, and in the world to come life everlasting." So the service of Christ is much better than the service of the world. If the call had been "take gun and bayonet and go out into the battle-field ready to die for the glory of war," there would be many to make quick response. It has been computed that there have

been one hundred and fifty millions of men slain in fields of battle since the world was. There have not been nearly so many martyrs for Christ; he makes less claim on his followers than the world makes on its followers. Though we follow Christ and have a cross we are not therefore losers by our loyalty to the Master. Again I say Christ did not come to give us crosses, but he came to us who each had his cross to tell us what to do with it.

If we take up our cross we lose it. That is what Christ taught us. He said, in effect, "Do not wait till, like Simon the Cyrenian, you are compelled to bear the cross; take it gladly, bear it willingly, and you shall find that it will disappear."

To begin with, what is a cross? It is, of course, an instrument of execution, something upon which something else is crucified. In our life then, our cross is some circumstance or appointment which gives us an opportunity of crucifying our old denied self, something that gives us the chance of killing our old ambitions and preferences and pride—that is our cross. I am not now speaking of something in the clouds, but about something that touches each one of us and comes home to us every day. Every one reached by these words has such a something: you have a cross, I have a cross. What are you doing with it? Seeking to fling it from you? To escape its weight? Are you kicking at it, struggling under it? Then your life is a misery to yourself and to others. The Lord Jesus urges you to cease that, to be willing to have your cross, not to wait until the burden is laid upon you, but to meet it with a smiling face.

Take it up willingly, gladly. The circumstances of your life are not there apart from God; he permits them to meet you. Take up your cross, and you will find that you will lose it, for there can be no cross if your will is not athwart God's will; of course pain will still be pain, but there will be no cross in the suffering if it be taken as God's appointment.

We have an illustration of this in the early church. There can be no doubt that slavery is a great curse, yet when slaves in multitudes were led to Christ, Paul wrote to them and said: "Art thou called, being a slave? Care not for it." Do not seek to be free, take up your cross, remain a slave for Christ's sake. The effect of that was that by and by labor became so ennobled that wherever Christ was known slavery became impossible. They took up the cross; immediately for them the cross disappeared, and ultimately it disappeared for everybody.

Six times within the compass of three Gospels we are told that we cannot be Christ's disciples unless we take our cross. As far as I know there is nothing else told us so often. We hear a great deal to-day of advance in the divine life: it would be well if we learned this lesson which lies on the threshold of it. It must be of the first importance to be reiterated with such frequency. On four of these occasions there is a slight difference in the emphasis.

In Matthew 10: 38, there is the simple statement, "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." Our cross is not one that we make, but one that we take. If it be light we need not try to increase its pressure; some people

almost seem to think they cannot be holy unless they are unhappy, and that unless they bear a heavy cross they cannot be well-pleasing to God. O soul, thou hast but to take the cross that is appointed. Do not mistake thy cross for thy care; thou art not to cling to thy care, it is to be cast on him who can bear it; but thou art to cling to thy cross, and take it up with a glad heart. Thou canst not do this unless thou hast denied thyself, for it takes two hands to lift thy cross, thou hast not a hand to spare to cling to self.

In Mark 10: 24, we discover where we get our cross—from the hand of Christ. No Scripture is of private interpretation, and this word, addressed to one man, has a meaning for all. It is the word of the Lord Jesus, "*Come*, take up thy cross." Who would not take a cross when it is given to us by the hand that was once nailed for our redemption? "Unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but to suffer for his sake."

The Revised version of Luke 14: 27, gives us another hint: "Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, cannot be my disciple." *His own cross.* To all of us it would seem so much easier to bear the cross of some other, the cross that seems to us trifling in comparison with our own. I could so easily bear yours, and you think it would be child's play if you were called to bear mine. I am not sure our estimate is correct, but even if it is there could be no blessing unless we bear the appointed cross, and if we did not feel the cross we bear, the discipline which perfects the disciple would be lacking. Every

man is called to bear his own cross. You, yours; I, mine.

Is that a hard saying? Does it seem impossible for you willingly to accept the circumstance or frustration that seems to cover all your life as with a pall? Listen again to one word in one of our texts. "Let him take up his cross daily." *Daily.* Ah! that throws a flood of light upon it. The great cross looms up before me in the early morning, and I shrink back from it in terror, saying, "I cannot always bear *that.*" Then there comes the voice which assures me, "My child, you are not called to bear it always, only take it for today." And with a glad response I say: "Is it only for a day it is given to me? Ah, Lord, I can by thy grace bear it for today;" and that day there is no cross. Daily! Do not forget the limit in thy cross-bearing; thy cross, like thy bread, is given to thee but a day at a time.

Do you remember Schiller's legend of the birds? They were made at first without wings, the legend runs. They could sing but they could not soar, and they sang so sweetly that God gave them the gift of wings, but at first the wings were only placed as weights upon them. Since God had put them there the birds bore them patiently, until at length the wings grew into their body, the burdens became pinions, and the birds were able to soar as well as sing. So shall it be with our cross: if we patiently bear it we shall at last find that it will lift us up nearer heaven and nearer God.

Yonder is that great throbbing bulb of silk, which

all morning they have been filling with the gas that makes it eager to rise from its place. Twelve men hold it back as it sways in the wind, twelve men strong and alert. Presently a little man steps out and proposes to manage it himself. You say he will never be able to do it: what the twelve do with difficulty he cannot do alone. But he gives the order for the release of the balloon. Let go. He is about to adopt a different method of control. They tried to hold it down; he is going to take it up; and the result is that the balloon which he takes up takes him up. Even so shall it be with thy cross.

The countryman walks the ship that is towed down the river. He has never seen a ship before, and he questions, "What are these? and these? and these?" They are the masts and sails and spars and booms. "The ship would be much better without them," he says, and if the ship were always to be in the river he would be right. But the tugboat casts her off when she reaches the sea, the sails are set, and lo, the sails, which the ship carries, carry the ship. And of this I am certain, that when at last we see the Lord, (may we all see him in peace!) there is nothing for which we shall thank him, after his grace, more than for the cross, which now we seek so often to escape. Poor foolish we!

II. Christ's Yoke

Here are two paradoxes. The first is that if we take our cross we shall lose it; the second, that if we want to find rest we must begin to do something. Turning now to our second text we read: "Take my

yoke upon you . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls." What is the meaning of this expression?

It must mean that Christ is the Master. It is the master who puts the yoke on the neck of the ox. If I take Christ's yoke I confess he is the Master. Let me remember too that he, who deigned to spend years in the carpenter's shop, knows well how to make a yoke that will fit easily the toiling servant. If we may quote Justin Martyr, a writer of the second century, in his *Dialogue with Trypho,* he says, concerning Jesus, " He was deemed a carpenter, for he was in the habit of working as a carpenter when among men, making plows *and yokes.*" He makes yokes still, and those who take his yoke find that it is easy. Elizabeth Fry, toward the end of her active life, said a wonderful thing; that ever since she knew the Lord, forty-six years before, she never waked one single morning but her first thought was " How can I best serve my Master this day? " The yoke was always on her shoulders. What a blessed life!

To take Christ's yoke means that I become Christ's coworker. The yoke is not for one but for two. Still in the East they make them as they made them in Bible times, and I have seen them often, the place for one ox at one end, and another at the other. So when Christ asks me to take his yoke he means the yoke he has taken, he calls me to fellowship with him in his service. He is at one end of the yoke, I am to be at the other. I am to do what he is doing. Now what is Christ doing? What is he doing today? What was he doing when he spake these words?

What has he been doing ever since? One thing: and if the answer is as great a blessing to you as it has been to me, I shall be amply repaid for suggesting it. If I can discover what Christ is doing I discover what I am to do, for I am to take his yoke. What then? *He is engaged in saving men and women.* Pause and think of it. That is what he is doing today, what he was doing when he uttered this invitation, what he has been doing all along the ages. He calls me to take his yoke: that means I am to devote my life to the self-same purpose. Henceforth I am not to live for business or for pleasure, these are only the accidents of life; I am to seek always and everywhere, in company with Christ, to save men and women, to save them by bringing them into the Church and to save them when they are in it. That thought has been to me a greater stimulus than I can tell.

If I take Christ's yoke, I take Christ. Just as a woman in taking her wedding-ring takes her husband, I take Christ when I take his yoke. Christ becomes more real to me when my life is devoted to his service; those who have begun to seek the salvation of others will know well what I mean when I say that after that Christ is so much more definite, so much more possessed, as almost to be a different Christ. If you doubt it, take his yoke and put it to the trial.

This is the way to find rest unto the soul. It will be rest, for you will be free of all entanglements: having now only one purpose you will never have to choose between a multitude. Henceforth you live

but to have men in union with Christ. When people come to me and ask whether they may go here or there, whether they may do this or that, play cards, dance, go to the theater or what not, I always say: "My dear friend, there is something wrong, or it would never occur to you to ask the question. Take Christ's yoke on your shoulders and you may then go anywhere and do anything, for you will then evermore be doing only one thing everywhere, and all these questions will be answered before they are asked."

Again, it will be rest because you will be quite sure of your interest in Christ's salvation when you are yoked with him in service. I have the greatest sympathy with Moody when he was asked whether he never doubted or feared, and in his own sharp way answered, "Man, I am too busy, I have no time to doubt or fear." You will generally find that it is the people who do nothing for the souls of others who doubt about their own. How different it was with Clarkson, that great man who accomplished so much to free the slaves, and who when he was asked after his strenuous toils, "Mr. Clarkson, how is it with your own soul?" looked up, and answered as if surprised, "I had almost forgotten I had a soul." Does this shock you? Are you afraid for him? Let the inscription on his monument which I read in a church near Ipswich, placed there at his own request, reassure you. *Trusting Christ Crucified.* There is nothing higher than to trust Christ Crucified for your own soul, and then to spend all your energy in seeking the souls of others.

Yoked with Christ you have rest, for you are never troubled as to where you are to go. Since you are united to him, one of two things must happen, either he must go your way, or you must go his. You cannot expect him to move at your choice, so the only alternative is that you must go where he chooses. If he leads you to great success, it is well; if he leads you to apparent failure, it is equally well, since you are yoked with him. In Samaria, where there is great joy in the city, in the desert where there seems to be no service worthy of the name, there is the same rest because of the yoke.

If you were yoked with Christ in that fashion you might have to undertake some hard service, you say. Perhaps you would be called to Africa, or to India, or to China? Perhaps. Probably. But that need not disturb your rest, for still you will be yoked with Christ. You feel that you cannot plow that field. I feel that I cannot do this work, but (and I say it with the utmost reverence) Christ and I can do it, Christ and you can do it, and he graciously allows you and me to be yoked with him. No place can be too difficult since he and we are together in the work.

But do you say that you are such an ill-worker, that you do not know what to do. He knows that and provides for it. He says, "Learn of me." Look what I do, and do that. The young ox yoked with the old ox, learns to keep step. But will Christ teach such a dull scholar as you—I mean such a dull scholar as I? Yes, for he says, "I am meek and lowly in heart." Ah! Master, it must be so, else long

ago thou hadst cast me away from thy service! But now, even in my ignorance and failure, I have rest, because of thy grace.

A friend of mine saw in South Africa a young ox yoked with an old one for the first time. The animal, unaccustomed to the task, was frisky and refused to work; it pranced and circled and sported for a long space. All the while it was jumping about the old ox looked at it with its great patient eye, and when it was tired, just started off on the furrow as if nothing had happened. The young worker had at the end to begin just where it would have had to begin at the beginning, and to do the very work it had at first refused. How often has this to be true of Christ's workers, who have turned away at first from the service to which he called them: they have gained nothing by delay, but at the end, when their hearts have been humbled, they have just had to do the very thing they shirked at first. Christ is very patient with those who bear his yoke, but he is inexorable in his claim.

Remember a yoke is not a burden, it is something to make a burden light; it is like the harness of a horse, which helps it to draw with ease a load that, without the harness, would be impossible. If you ever hear anybody say that Christ bears the heavy end of the yoke, remember that the yoke has no heavy end, it is not heavy at all, it is easy, and it makes life's burden easy too. This is rest.

I have heard of a Welsh preacher, I think his name was Rees, who was most popular and especially popular in a certain village where he was announced to

preach on a certain day. He arrived in the village and went to the house where he usually stayed. The time of the meeting arrived, the place was crowded, but the preacher had not come. They began to sing, and the elders of the church sent a young man to tell Mr. Rees that the people were waiting for him. He returned and said the preacher was coming. Had he seen him? they demanded. No, but he had heard him speak: he had knocked twice without answer, and then he had listened at the door. Mr. Rees was talking to another man, and he had said, "If you do not go, I will not go." The young man was not well instructed in Scripture: what the preacher had said was, "If thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence." The elders knew, and as they stroked their beards they said, "He was talking to another man! Well, they will both be here presently." While they were speaking, Mr. Rees came in and—the Other Man came in too. There was in the chapel one of those little pulpits that only hold one person, but when Mr. Rees went up the Other Man went up too. They had a glorious meeting that night; it was not because Mr. Rees was there, but because the Other Man was there—the Man Christ Jesus. O men and women, the thought is almost overwhelming that as I bear this blessed yoke Christ, the Other Man, will always be near me: though everybody else may leave me I shall be able to say, "Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me," and taking my cross daily from his hand, and daily wearing his yoke on my shoulder, my life will be just a little slice of heaven cut out and sent down to earth.

XV

THE UNEXPLAINED GIFT

When the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna; for they wist not what it was.— ***Exodus 16: 15.***

The manna was a miracle; a miracle forty years long. When the Israelites saw it that first morning they knew it was a thing they had never seen before. It had never been seen in the world before, and has never been seen in the world since that desert march. It was God's provision for a special need. That is the first thing I want to say to my own heart and yours that when there is a special need, God is able to make special provision for it.

No one knew how the manna came. No one saw it come. It always came in the night. It could be pounded in a mortar, but it vanished in the sun. It only came sufficient for one day, and yet on the sixth day there came sufficient for two. If it was kept over it stank, and yet there was a pot of it kept before the ark of the testimony all through the years. Miracle on miracle! And the thing we want to learn in this rationalistic age is that the God of nature is above what we call the laws of nature, that they are the outworking of his power by which he has hitherto helped us, and that he is quite able to transcend his own working in the past. If we get hold of that to begin with, our time will not be ill-

spent. Then we may be quite sure that when God supplies the need he will give us the very thing that will match it. This manna that came was beautiful, like a pearl, sweet to the taste and good to the relish. It was satisfying for their need, and there was enough for the whole camp. That is how God gives to us when he sees our wants. It was not their complaining and murmuring that brought the manna; it was their need. It would have come if they had not murmured. Those who were wise among them were aware afterward that they murmured in vain. I knew a young lady, one of God's children, who was called to live for years in a place she did not like, and, because of that, she kept grumbling at her lot. Then God brought her into a wealthy place, and she said, "If I had only known what God was going to do, I would not have murmured."

There was an inner meaning in that gift of God. You remember how our Lord, in his temptation, after forty days, was hungry. The devil said: "Make these stones bread." Then our Lord quoted: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." A far more beautiful answer than the mere words convey! Read it in their setting in Deuteronomy 8: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers

know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." Our Lord in his temptation knew quite well that if the Father wanted him to have bread he could easily give him some manna. He was not going to turn stones into bread.

In St. Mark's Cathedral, in Venice, there are a series of frescoes representing scenes in the Old Testament. The last is the giving of the manna. And so Mr. Ruskin, when he had more spiritual insight than in later years, said: "This is not only artistic, but it is true; for is it not written, 'Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead?' That is all the Old Testament can do for you." But when you come to the New Testament, to the great revelation of Jesus Christ, you have it said in Revelation 2: 17 of the church in Pergamos, in the midst of its persecution, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." It is not only the stone that is a secret, but the manna also is a secret—the hidden sustenance which God gives every soul of man that turns to him.

You may receive from his hand that which you cannot express in words, and say in effect, "It is manna, but we know not what it is." It will be something too great for human language.

I think it would be well for us who are inclined to be critical at this stage, when there is so much to

criticize, if we would remember that all God's gifts transcend our speech. We speak of the atonement, and very often miss the glory of the atonement because we are so eager to define it in our own terms. There are unknown sufferings and meanings in the cross of Christ. It is manna. We know not what it is, but that does not prevent us from feeding upon it and rejoicing in it.

We speak of the inspiration of the sacred Scriptures; and every man who knows anything about the power of God's Word will say it is an inspired Word. But what that term means, how much it means, how far it goes, what man can say? It is manna.

We speak of the Epiphany; but we are inclined, in our very zeal, to differ from each other regarding it. But it is manna. We know not what it is.

I speak now specially to God's children. Have there not been times in your experience when, after a period of bitterness and dryness, there has come to you some grace that is so unspeakable that you have not been able to name it? You do not know what it is, except that it is almost the beginning of heaven on earth. There comes a gentleness of spirit where before there has been hardness. You think well of other people, you think that which is good; all bitterness is driven from your mind. What is it? There comes a deep peace in your heart where before there was no rest, a peace that passeth all understanding, and you almost say that your warfare is accomplished and the days of your mourning are ended. What is it? As gently drops his blessing as the manna in the olden time. There comes to you a deep and

ardent love, when you feel your heart going out to God in new devotion, and to his people, and to the whole world. Have you felt anything like that? There comes to you clearness of perception, your doubts vanish, your longing after reality, truth, sureness, is met; finality is reached. You know you have got the ultimate with God. What is that? It is manna. We know not what it is.

Sometimes, looking at another side of it, there comes victory over sin. You stand triumphant over some evil that has dominated you for years and are so completely delivered that you even forget your former thraldom. What is that?

There comes to you a power to testify. Although you were tongue-tied before, you become eloquent for Jesus Christ. Again and again you speak words of wisdom, and can so witness for Christ in the logic of the Holy Ghost that conviction is carried to human hearts. What is that? There comes a delight in submission, so that, instead of fighting his providence, you welcome the sweet will of God. There even comes a joy in affliction. Your friends come to sympathize with you, and they are tongue-tied because they see the radiance of your face. Like the prophet, you walk by the river Ulai delighting in God. What is that? It is manna. We know not what it is.

So in the church of God there sometimes comes, after a time of dryness and hardness, a desire for worship. The congregation suddenly increases; there comes the spirit of hearing upon the people; they joyfully throng where the Gospel is preached;

they listen eagerly when the truth of God is uttered in their hearing. Even the old sermons that fell flat before now have power. What is that? There comes a brotherly love among the saints, so that those who were so ready, from a matter of principle, to point out faults in their brother, are now more eager to discover his virtues. There comes orthodoxy of heart; there is a flying to the Cross; there is a return to the old gospel from the new; there is a delight in the blood of Jesus and the doctrines of grace; your mother's Bible becomes precious to you, especially when you turn it up and see her finger-marks and know that she found comfort there. What is that?

There comes to you a longing for spiritual awakening, and you desire that above all things. You are not touchy after that; you do not stand on your dignity after that. There comes a deepening of your spiritual life. You know there is such a thing as the filling of the Spirit; you are not only in touch with God's church and servants, but in touch with Jesus Christ himself. There comes to you ardency and alacrity in his service—real service, not make-believe; not worldliness, but service that is going to tell in eternity. There comes an outpouring of generosity; old reserves are brought to light, you give extravagantly, you give hilariously. What is that? It is something greater than human language can express; it is manna. We know not what it is.

But yet we know a good many things about it. We know this—that always these graces come to us like manna, when the dew is upon the ground, al-

ways with the dew. We read about that in the book of Numbers. It is very significant. Numbers 11: 9: "When the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it." Keep your Bibles open for a minute. The dew and manna always went together. The dew, of course, is a symbol of the Holy Ghost. We agree to that. If you want to know the spiritual counterpart of the manna, it is that which comes by the Holy Ghost; you know he has been there.

There are three things necessary for the distillation of the dew: First, it must be night; next there must be a clear sky; and, thirdly, there must be a still air. And when worldly help is shut out; when you see you cannot help yourself; when your day is over and the night falls and you get into the darkness, you say there is no help in man, and you look up and have a clear vision of God, and then there is a still heart waiting for him, the dew forms, and upon the dew the manna.

It is all round about the camp. It is not a blessing for a few; it is a blessing for the whole people, for all the saints. Grace is such a great thing that it cannot bear any distinctions where it falls. It distinguishes those who receive grace from those who do not; but any man who has grace is akin to any other man who has grace. It is for the whole camp. The dew rises and is absorbed, but the manna remains. The best of it all is, it lasts, it goes right through the years until the desert march is over.

It needs a cleansed palate. Have you got hold of that? You have kept open your Book at Numbers 11. Look at verse 4: "The mixed multitude that

was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: but now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes." You say there is nothing wrong in eating leeks, and you say garlic is not poison. No, but will you allow me to say that there are some people who do not eat these things; and if you persist in eating them you will find that they will not want your company, and you will shut yourself out. I would choose to be with those people of God who feed upon the "living manna," rather than slyly indulge in leeks and garlic and thereby miss the company and fellowship of the saints. There are heaps of things that are not wrong any more than the leeks and garlic are wrong, but they are much better left on one side.

Let us look again at this manna, the thing we know not what it is. First of all, it is the Lord's gift to us. We may be quite sure of what the Lord Jesus spoke about this manna in John 6. I think the Lord caught himself in the middle of a sentence, the punctuation wants to be looked at. It is: "Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven." What followed in his mind after that? Very reverently I say to you this: He knew who gave that bread from heaven in the desert. It was he himself. Moses did not give it. He did not say, "I gave it." But you can read that into it. It was he who gave the bread from heaven. "But my

Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." It is the Lord who gives this "manna." It is a new grace. It is the Lord's gift to you.

You know where it comes from. It comes from heaven. There is a Psalm about it (78: 22-25): "Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation: though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, and had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels food."

> With ashes who would grudge to part
> When called on angels' food to feast?

If you had been down in Wales at the time of the revival and had heard them sing, "Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah," repeating the last lines over and over again, you would never forget two verses of it. One of them ends with "Songs of praises," and the other with

> Bread of Heaven, Bread of Heaven,
> Feed us till we want no more.

If you do not like this manna, you will not like heaven either. It is from heaven, yet it is fit for earth. The thing that God gives us is not something that is not fit for common nature's daily food. It is bread. You do not often get tired of bread, though I once called on a sick woman, and one of her complaints to me was that she was sure she was dying because she was tired of bread. You will get tired of confectionery. I ask you preachers to remember

that. If you feed your people with confectionery they will like it once or twice, but there will come nausea afterward. Give them bread and they will be all right—and all the more so if it has a little butter on it.

Another thing. The manna is to be received. It fell near them, but they had to go out and get it; it did not come into their tents though it was in the camp; they had to bend down and pick it up and carry it home and use it. There was a preacher talking to a lad about the freeness of the gospel, and he said, "Lad, if you were hungry and asked your father for bread, he would give it to you, would he not?" "No, he would not!" said the Lancashire lad. "What! Do you mean to say that your father is so hard-hearted that he would not give you bread?" "No." "What would he do?" "He would tell me, 'Lad, take t' knife and help yoursel'!'" You laugh at that, and it is a laughable thing. But, you know, the devil is laughing at some of you, because there is bread on the table and you will not help yourself. You are waiting until somebody puts it in your mouth.

I had a singular experience one Sunday morning. I had come home on Saturday night very tired. On Sunday morning I awoke at my accustomed time, and I said, "I wish they would bring me a cup of tea and a bit of bread and butter." But they did not come, and out of sheer weariness I turned and went to sleep. After a while I awoke with my eyes shut, and I kept my head on the pillow and said, "I wish I had a cup of tea and a little bread and butter!" I

waited, and nobody came, and in sheer disgust I said, " I suppose I'll have to get up." Then I turned round and I found that the tea and bread and butter had been on the table all the time. They had come in while I was asleep, and as they told me afterward, they thought it was a pity to waken me. The tea and the bread and butter were there, but I did not know they were so near. That is just the way with God's gift of blessing. We do not open our eyes to see it nor stretch our hand out to take it, though it is near us all the time. What is it? You say, " Unless I understand what it is I won't have it." You never understand all that God can do for you. You will never be able to put it in a syllogism. It is more than anything you can say. It is manna. We know not what it is.

That is how the truth came to me fifty-eight years ago, when a man said, " All you have to do is to take God's gift, and say, 'Thank you.'" I took God's gift that day. Forty years in the wilderness! It has lasted fifty-eight years for me, and it will last until I get through the gate yonder and eat of the corn of the land. You have to take God's gift and say, " Thank you." I know an army surgeon, and when his regiment was stationed at Windsor he and a few of his fellow disciples tried to preach the gospel to the people. There was one, the wife of the royal shepherd, who could not see the truth, and they tried to help her, but did not succeed. One muddy, rainy day she was going along the road, and saw a little bit of paper on the ground. She took it up and read on it a verse from " The Old, Old Story,"

Then take God's great salvation,
For Jesus loves to give;
Believe, and you receive it,
Believe, and you shall live.

What all their eloquence and urgency had failed to do that little scrap of paper did, and there amid the rain and the mud she received God's gift. That is just it. God has opened the windows of heaven, and he has poured out the grace that meets our need—a miracle that comes to us in a way the people of the world cannot understand. They say, "It is emotion, it is imagination, it is fancy!" Is it fancy? Then let me keep on fancying for ever! Is it a dream? Then let me never be awake! It is the reality of realities; we know it is true. None but his loved ones know what his love is. But he is the sum of all grace; he himself is the Bread of heaven; we sing of his very name that:

'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary rest.

So we come to our prayer:

I hunger and I thirst;
Jesus, my manna be;
O living waters, burst
Out of the rock for me.

XVI

THE OWNERS OF THE COLT

As they were loosing the colt the owners thereof said, Why loose ye the colt? And they said, The Lord hath need of him.—*Luke 19: 33, 34.*

These words were spoken, as you know, preparatory to the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The Lord had sent his disciples across the Valley of the Kedron to find a colt, upon which he was to ride into the city.

There are many lessons that spring to our mind as we think of it; the glory of our Lord, the fact that he willingly gave himself for our sins, that if there was one day in all his life when he could have asserted his kingship on earth that was the day. He had but to raise his hand and they had crowned him King in Jerusalem, Lord of Palestine, Monarch of the world—and when he died no man took his life from him, he gave it up of himself.

He knew where these disciples would find the colt which he sent them for, and it is of that colt rather than of the triumphal journey that I should like to speak. It may be a suggestion to us of other things perhaps as humble, which you and I might yield to Jesus Christ, and which, yielded, will help our Lord in his triumphal march to his kingdom in the world. The story is told in three of the Evangelists, and in the first the hint is given that somebody would object

to the taking of the colt. In the second Evangelist we are told that somebody objected; in the third Evangelist, who they were who objected, and that is the point. The point of the answer that Christ instructed his disciples to give is missed in our version. The owners of the colt said, "Why loose ye the colt?" The word for owner and the word for Lord in the original version is the same. You may choose whichever you like, but you must use the same word in each case. If you prefer the word owner it reads thus: "The owners of the colt said, 'Why loose ye the colt?' and they said, 'The Owner hath need of him.'" Or, if you use the word Lord, the passage reads: "The lords of the colt said, 'Why loose ye the colt?' and they said, 'The Lord hath need of him.'"

So, you see, while they were the owners, Christ was the Overlord; and while they could keep the colt as long as they needed him and Christ did not need him, when Christ needed him their right ceased. Have you gripped it?

I. Now let us look at it from various angles. First of all, about *our families*. They are ours, it is our home, our father, our mother, our brothers, our sisters, our sons, our daughters; ours! We shut the world out, but we do not shut Christ out. Christ has the right to come in and say about any one of these dear ones, "This is mine." I know a woman in England who lost her child about twenty years ago, and she has never forgiven God Almighty since. And sometimes when I have gone to that which is, perhaps, the saddest office that a minister of the gospel

is ever called to perform, the burial of a little child, I have taken occasion to remind the weeping parents of the story of an Eastern lady. Her husband was absent on a long journey, and when he came home she met him at the door and would not allow him to enter until she had asked a question and got an answer. She told him that some time before a stranger had come and left a precious treasure in her keeping, and while her husband was away he had returned and demanded it back again. She wanted to know if she had done right to give it. The husband chided her, and said she could do no other. Then she took him by the hand and led him into his own house and showed him his own son lying dead. The Lord was the Stranger, and before any protest he would have made had risen, he had answered it himself. He who gave had the right to take.

It is not only amidst the Antarctic snows where there are heroes buried that we write the epitaph: "The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord." Let us remember that, dear as these sons and daughters, friends and loved ones, are to us, they are dearer to him, and, if he wants them, he must have them. We are the owners, he is the Over-Owner. We are the lords, he is the Lord Supreme.

But it is not always that our Lord takes those we love to heaven. Sometimes he leaves them on earth, and takes them in a way that we did not intend. I should like to ask, for instance, whether parents have any right to frustrate the call of Christ, when

he calls their loved one to missionary service. I know some people in this land who would have been missionaries, but their parents hindered them. None of us have any right to negative Christ's call.

When Richard Knill wanted to be a missionary he told his mother. Perhaps I had better tell you who Richard Knill was, that you may take more interest in him. If you know anything about the story of Spurgeon, you know that when he was a boy a minister came to his grandfather's house, and, taking the boy between his knees, he prophesied that one day the boy would be a preacher, and preach in Rowland Hill's chapel. And he asked him when that day came to give out the hymn:

> God moves in a mysterious way
> His wonders to perform.

And Spurgeon remembered his promise and gave out the hymn. That man was Richard Knill, who as a young man wanted to go to India, but his mother said he ought to wait till his father and mother were beneath the clods of the valley before he thought of such a thing. He waited quietly, and then one day his mother summoned him and did a beautiful thing. She took him to the room where his father sat, and, drawing from her own hand her wedding-ring, she said: "This is the dearest thing I possess. It was given me by your dear father, as a pledge of his love on our wedding-day. I have worn it for more than forty years, and now, in the expectation that I shall never see you again in this world, I give it to you. Your father gave it to me as a pledge of his love,

and in his presence I give it as a token of our united love to you." Was it not a beautiful thing, beautifully done? And that is what we must do. If Christ calls any one belonging to us in ways that we had not intended for them, if it be his call we must yield, for while we are the owners he is the Over-Owner; while we are the lords, he is the Lord Supreme. That is true about our families. God help us as we go home to remember that Christ is the Supreme Head there.

II. Now suppose we change the angle and think of *our possessions.* They are ours, and there is nothing in the New Testament to alter the law of *meum* and *tuum.* When those in the early time had all things in common, it was not because the apostles had the authority to take the possessions from the hand of the people. It was because they willingly gave them up. You remember Peter's words to Ananias concerning his property: "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold was it not in thine own power?" And no man here has any right to go to another man there and say, "Give me all that you have." If that man has gained it honestly, or it has been gifted to him, he has the right to do what he will with it, irrespective of the other man. But I am going to ask you a question: How much of your possessions, whether they be small or great, belong to Jesus Christ? You say, I give a tenth of all I possess to God. I think it would be a very beautiful thing if all of us did that. The Missionary Societies would soon cease to have deficits. Our church work would know no lack. But while you

have given that answer, will you allow me to say that it is an answer to another question, and not to the one I addressed to you. The question was not how much of your possession is to be given to charitable and religious enterprises, but how much of it belongs to Jesus Christ. There is only one answer possible. All of it. All of it. You may not have to give it all, but if he asks it all from you, then you must give it all.

Christ does not ask us in every case to rid ourselves of all, but sometimes he makes that demand. To the young man in the Gospel he said, "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and come and follow me." That was the only way for that man to be Christ's faithful disciple. He came to Anthony of the desert and told him he must get rid of his possessions and riches before he could be his disciple, and Anthony did it. He came to Raymond Lull, who five hundred years ago died for Christ in North Africa, a man of famous insight, who founded chairs of Oriental learning in Oxford, Salamanca, and Paris, and told him to give up his honors and wealth and be his herald amongst the Mohammedans, and he did it. He came to Francis of Assisi, and told him he must get rid of his riches before he could become his witness. He came to Ralph Waldo, and he had to cease to be the rich man of Lyons before he could found the Waldensian Church. He came to Robert Arthington, of Leeds, and told him to live as a pauper for life and leave his hundreds of thousands to missionary work. And it is possible Christ may come to you and say, "Get rid of all you have."

To some Christ calls, Leave boat and bay
And white-haired Zebedee.
To some the call is harder, Stay
And mind the nets for me.

Christ does not ask everybody to get rid of wealth, but he asks us to use it. What you have is his. I never understand my relation to my possessions, little or great, unless I realize that I have no right to spend anything except as Christ wishes it. I have no right to buy myself a new coat unless I think my Master wishes me to have one. I have no right to buy myself a new hat unless I think he wishes it. That interests some of you more. But you will enjoy the hat a great deal better if you are first persuaded of Christ's sanction. Do you see how you occupy a dual position; you are the Lord's servant and the Lord's steward. As the Lord's steward, of course, you must care for the Lord's servant. And I think I may be permitted to say that the Lord wants his servants to be properly treated. He does not want them to be surrounded by luxury, but to be cared for that they may do their best for him. But as the Lord's steward you have no right to spend the Lord's money on the Lord's servant unless you believe he would have you do it. And the answer to the question, How much of my possession belongs to Jesus Christ is, "The whole of it." You are the owner, he the Over-Owner; you are the lord, he the Lord Supreme.

III. May we change the angle again. Suppose we think of *our qualities*, those things that are specially ours by way of attainment, things which by hard in-

dustry or discipline you have made yours. It is possible I shall not be able to mention your special case, but I will illustrate some things, and perhaps the Spirit of God will reveal to you what is meant in your own life. Suppose you are a man with some gift, with some scientific ability, with some artistic skill, with some philosophical insight. You may have a strong will, you have the power of leadership, you have influence in your community, you have position, you have prestige, you bear a great family name. Do you see the thing that is yours? You say, If there is anything that is mine it is that. May I remind you that when the Lord comes to ask from us something, he will ask us probably for what we have, and not for what we have not. He will come to you and say, "Are you willing to give me that thing?" You will say, "That is mine!" But he may come to you and claim that very thing. Your voice to sing for him! How you thrill people when you sing! Have you sung for him? You can paint pictures! Can you paint a picture for him? You can lead people, you have this power, this gift, this capacity. Christ may come and say, "That is the thing I want."

There is no name honored more in England than that of Florence Nightingale. She tells us how she became the great woman she was. She says: "If I could give you the story of my life, it would go to show how one woman of ordinary ability"—(underline please)—"has been led by God in strange and unaccustomed paths to do in his name what he has done in her. And if I could tell you all, you would

see how God has done all, and I nothing. I have worked very hard, that is all. And" [listen] "I have never refused God anything." Brave Florence Nightingale! "I have never refused God anything." When William Booth, of the Salvation Army, was asked the secret of his success, he said there were people with greater attainments than his own, but the day came when he said that God should have all of William Booth there was. And the Lord Jesus claims that which is most essentially ours. We are the owners, he the Over-Owner; we the lords, he the Lord Supreme.

IV. Once more, suppose we think of *our life*. It is a little thing compared with his life, and with all the life in God's universe, but there is nothing that makes the individual more precious in his own sight than the gospel of Jesus Christ. When I think that God loved me as if there were nobody else, that Christ died for me as if there were none other, I stand up in my manhood. This life of mine is mine. I think we have to learn to live more individually, realizing that each one of us is an entity in God's world. Every man ought in a great sense to be captain of his own soul. Some of you are having your lives spoiled because you are always imitators. You are allowing other people to eat up your lives for you. Be yourselves.

But even if you are not a Christian you have not the right to do what you like with your life. You cannot have absolute possession. For instance, you have no right to end it. You did not begin it, and you have no right to end what you did not begin.

Believe me, I have learned in my experience that some of those who get highest, get nearest to the borders of despair, and if it ever comes to you to end your life, let this word stare you in the face: you dare not end what you did not begin.

You have no right to use your body for base purposes, to ill-treat your body. I mentioned Francis of Assisi just now. You remember that in his quaint phraseology he used to speak of himself as a spirit, and his body he looked upon as his brother the ass that carried him. And like most people who use donkeys he treated it very badly, and, before he had done with it, he had to apologize to his brother the ass for the way he had treated it. You and I have no right to ill-treat our body. But when we feel most the master of our own life we must realize that though we are the owners of ourselves, Christ is the Over-Owner. We are the lords, he is the Over-Lord, and we must recognize his Overlordship. He has a better right to me than I have to myself, and if he claims me he must have me.

It is a tremendous thing when Christ's word comes to one of his disciples to go and claim a human life. It was a great thing when Christ said to those disciples, "Go over the valley and find the colt." They went straight to the mark, and found the colt where Christ said. And if you and I are at Christ's disposal, he will often say to us, "Go to that man or woman or girl, and bring them to me." You protest you do not know how you will be received. You do, you do! If Christ sends you, you will be received joyfully. He will be there before you.

THE OWNERS OF THE COLT

When Christ sent the two disciples to find the colt, they did a daring thing, for without asking permission they began to untie it, and the owners said, "Why loose ye the colt?" And they replied, "The Lord hath need of him," and went on untying the colt. The men were the owners of the colt, but the Lord was the Over-Owner. That is the way we have to speak to souls. I wish I could speak to all the clergy and ministers tonight. I am never afraid to speak to ministers, though sometimes I am afraid to speak to students. I remember that Nero in his hatred of Rome one day wished that the Romans had only one neck, so that he might cut all their heads off at a stroke. I often wish that all the ministers had one ear, and that I could speak into it for ten minutes. I know what I would say. I would waste no time in preliminaries or apologies, but I would say: Men! people are waiting for Christ. It is ours to claim them. You need not wait to explain, to apologize. It is our business to go to those people and claim them and bring them to Christ, realizing in a great sense what the Lord said, that what we loose on earth he will loose in heaven. The servant of God must, according to the revised Timothy passage, take people captive to the will of God. There are more people at this hour inclined to Christ than ever before. Like the tower of Pisa, leaning toward him but not going over. O, that God's people may listen to Christ's word and claim lives for him, as these disciples brought this colt.

They brought the colt to Jesus. He was there at the corner of Olivet. Those of you who have been

in Palestine will remember the spot, where the whole of Jerusalem bursts on you in glory. There the Lord stood. The procession stayed till the colt came. And there is a work in your village that is stopped till you come to Christ, a work in your neighborhood that cannot be done till you yield yourself whole-heartedly to the Master who is waiting. Christ waits, and if for no other reason than that, yield yourself to him. The disciples brought the colt to Jesus, and they set him thereon, and he began his great entry into the city. He could not have done it without the colt. Nobody praised the colt. To begin with they put so many clothes on it that there was not much colt to be seen, and there were so many people round it that it was hidden. But the colt raised up Jesus, and I would be willing for my life to be unseen if I might all the time raise my Master up in the eye of the people, that he might get glory, and that I might help to carry him a bit along toward the Holy City. That would be worth while.

> Men heed thee, love thee, praise thee not,
> The Master praises. What are men?

I said that nobody praised the colt, but there was Somebody that did it. I know my Lord well enough to be sure that before he went into Jerusalem he patted the colt on the shoulder—I see him do it—and said: "Brave colt, you have carried me well though nobody noticed you, nobody praised you, nobody said, Hosanna, to you. But I will not forget. You have done it to me." And if you and I are really for Christ, to live for him, speak for him,

testify for him, help to raise Christ a little higher and magnify him, he will not forget, and we shall hear him say, "Well done. Well done, good and faithful servant!" Christ will not forget!

Some years ago I was in Ceylon, up in the mountains at Nuwara Eliya, and one night I was alone in a big house. I wandered from room to room, looking at things, and at length I came across a little book which I opened. I saw a verse there which I never saw before nor since, and that night in that far land under the Eastern stars it came as God's message to me. Perhaps it will be God's message to you to-night. This was it:

> The Lord himself hath need of thee.
> On, till the fight be won,
> And the King's word shall thrill thine heart,
> Servant of God, well done!

I have two thoughts. The first is, that the Lord has the right to us, and the second, he has need of us.

We are our own, but he owns us more. I am not saying that he owns us more than the world or the devil; that is a self-evident thing, but I am saying that he owns you more than you own yourself. He owns me more than I own myself. The Lord has a greater right to me than I have to myself.

Secondly, he has need of me. There are things in the world needing doing, and he wants me to do them.

I do not know, I cannot say, whether God may come to any of our families and claim, for heaven or for a new path on earth, those we love, but if he

does he must have them, even though they are dearer than life itself. He has the best right to them. I do not know, I cannot say, whether the Lord will come and make a new claim on you for that which is your possession, but if he does, then you must pour out your treasure at his feet. I do not know, I cannot say, whether he will claim that which is your peculiar attainment, but if he claims it he must have it. But I do know that he comes to every man or woman among us, and claims this life of ours. He has the right to it, and he has the need of it. May God help us all to say: "By his grace he shall have it. I am the lord, but he is the Over-Lord. I am the owner, but he is the Supreme Owner, and he shall have the whole of me."

Then you will go out with a blither step, and because you are under authority your life will be greater and your bearing will be nobler, yet your heart will be humbler; and the praise shall go to him who is Lord of life and time and eternity.

XVII

GO WITH HIM TWAIN

Whosover shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.—*Matthew 5: 41.*

"Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile"—let us be quite sure that we get the text correctly; "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile"—what shall be said after that? Why, of course, it will read—"Let him suffer for it, let him be sorry he did not compel somebody else. If you are compelled to go a mile, go under protest, go sullenly, struggle before you go, and while you are going give the man who compelled you a bad time of it; make the mile so memorable that he will regret having chosen you. Stand up for your rights. Do not be imposed upon."

Is that what Christ says! No, he says the very reverse. Listen to it, until his word evokes the wonder of your spirit. "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, *go with him twain.*" So far from resenting the inconvenient and unjust claim you are to meet it magnanimously. Do more than you are compelled to do. "Go with him twain."

The reference is evidently to ancient customs in the Roman Empire; when despatches were being hurried over the country the post was permitted to compel persons in one place to convoy it to another; and when the army passed, men were required to

render porterage for the baggage as far as the next station. It was indeed something like the press-gang in old days in England, or the *corvée* in Egypt—forced service. In modern language we would say that the man was commandeered.

Now what is to be the attitude of Christ's servants to things like these? It is to be a generous acquiesence, a willing *largesse,* a spontaneous excess of service—"Go with him twain."

The question at once arises whether this command, and the Sermon on the Mount that contains it, is to be taken quite literally, and to be obeyed in its details. This has been a matter of much debate among Christian people. I think, however, we shall all agree that Christ himself is the best expositor of his own sayings; we may be sure that his actions will agree with his words, and that we shall be safe in interpreting his meaning in the light of his own conduct. Did he interpret his words literally? He did not.

For instance, there is the exhortation two verses before the text: "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also." Once Christ was thus smitten: did he turn the other cheek? No. He resented the blow, and answered: "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?" (John 18: 23.) But though he did not give the other cheek to the smiter, he did far more—he gave himself to the death. To turn the other cheek would be child's play, a thing for mirth; Christ's words are not literal quibbles, they embody great principles, and Christ fulfilled his own

precepts as nobody else ever can. His words mean not less but more than they say. If it be merely literal that when I am compelled to go one mile I must go two, then the verse of the text might as well be dropped out of my Bible altogether, for nobody has ever actually compelled me to walk a mile, nor is likely to do so. These words apply to all the compulsions of life, the things over which we have no control, and they call us back from all our newfangled inventions in the way of Christian service, to the things that perhaps seem more ordinary and commonplace. Christ says to us in effect, do not so much seek some special way of pleasing me; accept the limitations and necessities of your life as an indication of my will, and instead of struggling, submit; instead of stinting your obedience, overwhelm with service.

Understood in its full meaning this word of the Lord Jesus will annihilate drudgery and glorify duty.

I. This Principle Will Annihilate Drudgery

There are many compulsions in life. We boast of our freedom, but it is really written within very narrow limits and in a few things. For the most part we are compelled. To begin with we are compelled to live in our own body, whatever its frailties and liabilities: we must live, too, in this age, and cannot live in any other: we had no choice as to the day of our birth, nor have we any choice as to the time or manner of our dying. Most of us must live in some particular locality, we cannot help it, and we

must associate with certain people whether we like it or not. Our career is within prescribed limits, and for an unknown time. The disciplines of life are laid upon us, good men often trouble us, and bad men vex us, demands are made upon us that we cannot escape; we owe a duty to our country, to society, to friends, to which we are forced to submit. From this springs the drudgery of life; we have really so little choice about things that, using Luther's words in another sense, we might almost say, "Here I stand, I can do no other, God help me."

Christ tells us not to resist the inevitable. If you cannot bring your circumstances to your mind, bring your mind to your circumstances. The Lord does not lift from his disciples the oppressions of men, he does not ease us of the irk and fret of our time; he warns us that we shall still be compelled to do certain things, and he tells us to yield with a good grace. We must go the mile. If injustice is done to you, and it cannot be remedied, or if you are subject to a necessity you cannot escape, do not seek to alter the unalterable. Transmute the *must* into the *will*. The bird in the cage must learn to be happy within the bars. Do not set about the inexorable in a slavish temper, struggling all the while to be free; so far from that, accept the inevitable as an indication of the way along which God wishes you to walk, and be willing to walk in that way as far as he chooses to call you.

See God in the happenings of each day. It was he who permitted you to be compelled; if you are his child, your life, every instant of it, is in his hand.

He knew the precise moment when the post would be coming along the road, and it was he who permitted you to be in the way at that moment. He knew the injustice which a human government, even a government seeking to be just, would inflict on you; he knew that what helps the people on the whole would wring your life's blood from you. He knew that bad trade would fall heavily on you while others seem always to avoid its ill effects; he knew the sickness and trial that would come to your house, passing others by. He knew it all, and he could have hindered it, had he not some higher purpose to serve by allowing it to happen.

The man who compels you—if it be a man—is perhaps as much the victim of circumstances as you are—he is himself compelled. Your position will not be bettered if you vent your spleen upon him, or upon circumstances. Say the rather, "This is God's will for me, I am evidently destined to go this way, and therefore I will go this way with all my heart." "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."

Do more than you are compelled. This will be good discipline for you. If when your inclinations are at first thwarted you feel that you must resist, just give your life the chastisement of doing something extra along the line of resistance. Say, "Old Adam, I will not only go one mile, I will go two; that will teach thee to resist God's way."

This will disarm the man who compels you. He is ready for your opposition, he has met with nothing else but opposition along the way. When you meet

him with a ready compliance he will scarcely know what to make of it—you will have won him as your friend for the journey, and two miles with a friend are easier than one with an enemy.

The thought of the second mile will also make the first mile seem shorter, it will cease to be irksome when already in your mind you are arranging for the extra bit. If you will allow me slightly to change the word and to put "mule" for "mile," I think I can illustrate my meaning more fully. Sometimes I have seen a mule with panniers bearing a burden heavier on one side than on the other, endeavoring to ascend a Swiss mountain, and the porter, unable to distribute the load more evenly, has taken a great stone and put it on the other side. The mule is better able to carry the double burden, for now the load is poised and the balance of weight gives it ease. It is even so with the second mile; it will offset the first.

Besides this, it is only the second mile that is worth anything. It counts nothing to do what you cannot help doing, but when you do the thing you could easily escape, that brings the blessing and wins the praise. "The best of it is," they say sometimes about a man who has done a good deed, "that he needn't have done it, nobody expected it of him." Oh, when you are compelled to go one mile, do not make yourself unhappy by grudging some other man his escape from it. Rather comfort yourself with the thought that when you go the second mile you will have also saved a second man that weary tramp.

At the end you and the man who compelled you will part in a very different temper than else you

would have done. The spontaneous second mile will win a recognition that would never have been given at the end of the first mile grudgingly endured.

This then is the first lesson. Choose things in which you have no choice: welcome the cross that you must carry: go willingly along the road you are compelled to travel, and be prepared to go farther than you are compelled. This principle is of wide application. If I might give it a very practical turn, I would say that here perhaps lies a solution of the difficulties between capital and labor. I have heard it said that today men are inclined to give as little work as possible, and that employers are inclined to reduce wages to the minimum. As far as there is any truth in that, it is all wrong. Each is necessary to the other, both are compelled; let both then willingly deal lavishly with the other, giving not as little but as much as possible, and giving what is not compelled; as much work, as much wages as possible. I am sure that is what Jesus Christ would say. So drudgery will be annihilated.

II. This Principle Will Also Glorify Duty

It will teach us to fulfil righteousness. In this same discourse our Lord teaches us that our righteousness must be greater than the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. Their obedience was of the law, they were supposed to do what was commanded, and they had no thought of doing any more. But even the law only indicates the way, it gives only the general direction. It says for instance, "Thou shalt not kill"; we are compelled to go that mile.

Jesus Christ would have us go farther, and he tells us that we are not even to hate our brother; that is the second mile: go twain. It says "no adultery"; that is the first mile: but we must go twain, and never be satisfied until our hearts are cleansed of every evil thought. The first mile is "Thou shalt not bear false witness"; the second is that your word is to be so straight that your "Yea" shall always be "Yea," and your "Nay," "Nay." Go twain; not only speak the truth, but "swear not at all." The man who takes an oath that he will speak the truth only declares that without the oath he might perhaps speak falsely. It is not enough to give true witness on oath, be always so true that you will never take an oath. Compelled to go one mile, go twain.

It will lead us to render unstinted service. Do not ask whether the thing is absolutely necessary. Do not say, "How much must I do?" Ask, "How much may I do?" Ask whether it will give joy to the Master.

> Dole not thy duties out to God,
> But let thy hand be free.
> Look long at Jesus! His sweet blood,
> How was it dealt for thee?

It may perhaps be said to you that you are doing more than Christ demands; but be sure of this that you will never be able to do more than Christ will accept at your hand. Invent surprises of love, make duty a delight, serve until you shall sing

> 'Tis joy, not duty, to speak his beauty,
> My soul mounts on the wing.

Give Christ an excess of devotion, an overplus of loyalty, an extravagance of service. "Give yourself royally" as a dying saint once said to a disciple. The beauty of life is in the extra things. Be like the men who built Seville Cathedral. "Come," they said, "let us build so that the people who come after us will think we were mad!" If it is worth going one mile for Christ, it is worth going another. Be prodigal in your offering. Go twain.

It will prompt us to enjoy overflowing fellowship. "Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us by the way," said the Emmaus disciples. Yes, but it is always in the second mile that Jesus Christ speaks such words.

We cannot live the Christian life at all without some communion with Christ. Here we are all compelled. We must pray; so much prayer is necessary; that is the first mile. Stop there, and you fail of the delight that has been the experience of the people of God in all ages. Pray more. Go the extra mile. Do not reduce your fellowship with Christ to its lowest limits; it is in the last bit of the walk that Christ will most reveal himself to you and tell you his secret; in the second mile your heart will burn within you, and you will not only be a Christian, you will learn to be a saint.

It will cause us to give generously of our substance. We are compelled to give something to God's work. Does your heart then say, "How little?" or does it say, "How much?" Do not give grudgingly or of necessity. Does your conscience compel you to give a tenth of your income to the service of

Christ? Well, that it is the first mile, and I fear many struggle against even so much. Go twain. When you have given all you felt compelled to lay aside, give a little more. Stint yourself of something, deny yourself some gratification, make a sacrifice, and cast in still another gift into the treasury. The best rule for giving is to give until you feel it, and then to keep on giving until you don't. The joy of generosity comes in the second mile:

> It was never loving that emptied the heart,
> Or giving that emptied the purse.

This principle once grasped is, as I have said, of almost endless application. It leads us to see in the appointed ways of life our chief opportunity of pleasing our Lord. We need never seek any better way than the way our feet are compelled to walk; there we may serve God first, and perhaps there we may serve him best. This word of Christ will glorify all duty. If, for instance, you are compelled to live with some person wholly uncongenial, remember that Christ expects you to accept this compulsion gladly, even to do more than you are absolutely obliged to do. He will open the door of liberty in his own good time. "Ah!" one said to me after I had preached this sermon in a certain town, "I wish I had heard that while father was alive, but now it is too late." Let those heed who have still the opportunity.

It will make us squander ourselves for Christ's sake. All God's gifts are given us richly to enjoy, but in this suffering world there are ever clamant calls to sacrifice. No Christian worthy of the name

but makes some sacrifice for Christ. Have you gone with the Lord of Calvary one mile? Go with him twain. He compels the first; render willingly the second. Give up something else for him. It is not demanded perhaps, but if it will glorify his name, or help his people, how precious it will be in his sight!

May I ask you to think of the problem of drunkenness in this light? You cannot be a Christian drunkard—that would be an anomaly, there is no such thing. In the service of Christ you are compelled to be sober; that is the first mile, but is that all? Go *twain*. Be a total abstainer from drink that intoxicates. Do you say that there is no such command in the Bible. I am quite prepared to admit it; we do not need a command for the second mile, that is to be undertaken spontaneously; and we are to walk along it with a glad free heart.

Do not grudge that extra mile, do not offer it because some one else has done so, but stay long enough in Christ's presence to catch his generous spirit and feel you can do nothing else; since he by his providence indicates the way in the necessity laid upon you in some things, let that be what you will choose above all others for his praise.

Do not boast of the second mile. The spirit that will impel you to walk it will bring you home again in no mood to parade your deed as specially praiseworthy. You will make the sacrifice, or give the gift, or perform the service, or touch the bounds of holiness, and yet keep a quiet, sweet, and modest heart, counting everything too small and mean for such a Master and Companion. Yea, for the joy of

his presence at the last, you will be willing to go far beyond the two miles. With Rutherford you will say,

> The King above in beauty,
> Without a veil is seen,
> It were a well-spent journey
> Though *ten* deaths lay between.

Now in considering these two topics you have in effect come with me the two miles. Preachers are always supposed to have a *Thirdly:* but I do not ask you for a third mile, only a few steps beyond the milestone. I cannot close without saying that if the grace of Christ teaches us this lesson, it will itself be toward us as it asks us to be toward others. It will give as much as it demands, the cause will be equal to the effect. We may judge the Lord himself by what he asks of his disciples.

Shall Christ be a Saviour sufficient for this life and fail us for the next? No; we compel him to go a mile, he will go twain. Or shall he save us by and by, and fail to save us now? That be far from him who urges us to such magnanimity. He will not fail though all else fail.

> If I could find,
> No love in all the world for comforting,
> I know a voice would sound. Daughter, I am,
> Can I suffice for heaven and not for earth?

How great is his patience! He goes with us all the way, he loves us in the world, and he loves us to the end. We have compelled him many a mile, yet he stands ready to go another. Did he forgive you at the first; and have you fallen again, and do you

doubt whether he will again forgive? Oh! he might well desert you at the end of the mile, but he will go with you still. Up then and forward with him. Who can say to what height of glory he will lead?

What limit is there to thee, love,
Thy course where wilt thou stay?
On! On! the Lord is better far
Today than yesterday.

XVIII

HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.—*Luke 1: 74, 75.*

The words will be familiar to us all, not only from our reading in the Scriptures, but from the General Thanksgiving, wherein we pray "that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, that we may show forth thy praise, not only with our lips but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The words are the words of Zacharias, as you know, and occur in one of the series of songs that were sung when the Lord was coming into the world. The whole earth seemed to break forth into singing. You have song on song, and that is always the way when our Lord draws near. In the days of the first advent, everybody sang; you had the *Magnificat*, you had the *Benedictus*, you had the *Nunc Dimittis*, and you had the *Gloria in Excelsis*. Zacharias sang; and Elizabeth sang; and Mary sang; and Simeon sang; and the angels sang, at least I suppose they sang, though we are only told they *said* certain things, but I could not fancy them saying what they did unless they sang it. Now we shall get into the

very love of God and the very presence of Christ on the wings of our song! Zacharias sang, but he did not sing at the beginning, because he did not believe. You know the story, how, while he was serving in the temple, the angel spoke to him, and he could not credit the message, and he was struck dumb. There is many a man dumb because he does not believe, there is many a man has no testimony because he has no faith. For months Zacharias waited, and then he spoke to some purpose, and these are part of his words. He lived before Christ, but he had learned the gospel that Christ brings to his people. I mention six of these words. *He had learned that we serve the Lord.* Have we got as far as that yet? Can we say—

> Dismiss me not thy service, Lord,
> But train me for thy will;
> For even I, in fields so broad;
> Some duties may fulfil;
> And I will ask for no reward,
> Except to serve thee still.

Zacharias had learned next that *he was to serve because he was delivered;* he was not delivered because he served. Now have you got as far as that yet? You are not expecting deliverance because you do something to please God; you please God when you are delivered. Put things in the right order. Then he learned that *when God delivers he delivers completely;* we are delivered out of the hand of *all* our enemies. Have you got as far as that yet? Then he knew that *God does not deliver from a few foes, he delivers from all.* In the next place he learned

that *we are to serve without fear;* not as if we were under a hard taskmaster, but remembering that we are serving One who is full of love, who is our Father in Jesus Christ our Lord. In the fifth place he learnt that *we serve all the days of our life.* We never have a day off in Christ's service, never have a holiday, and one reason is we never want one.

Then the topic I want to direct your attention to is the sixth thing, putting all the other five aside, *we are to serve in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.* "In holiness and righteousness."

I. These Are Two Qualities

These are not the same thing, they are two things, not one. They are not two words for one quality, but two words for two qualities. There is an old English way of speaking where you emphasize the thought by doubling the words. You have it on the very first page of the Prayer Book, to which I have already referred. You say, "Acknowledge and confess." Now "acknowledge" and "confess" are not two things, they are two words for one thing. You say you will not "dissemble nor cloak them"; again two words for one thing. Farther on comes the phrase "assembled and met together"; and then you ask those things that are "requisite and necessary" for the body and the soul. In each case the two words are for one thing; emphasizing the thought—in a style somewhat archaic but quite effective.

But when we speak of holiness and righteousness, we do not use two words for one thing, but two

words for two things. We shall go wrong if we think they are the same thing. They are allied but different. Holiness is a temper, righteousness is a tendency; holiness is an atmosphere, righteousness is an attitude; holiness is condition, righteousness is conduct; holiness is the character, righteousness is the deed; holiness has reference to God, righteousness has reference to man.

"Holiness"—it is a word much derided amongst people of the world; frantically sought by some earnest souls, hysterically desired by those who want to have the utmost God can give, but a great many people just put it aside and think it is a very unpractical thing. A Christian man, a man in good standing in his church, said to me in an off-hand way, "Oh! I do not believe in holiness," and I made free to answer him, I hope, in a becoming spirit, "Well, God does." Is it not written, "Follow after holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"? And when the Lord brings the ransomed home to Zion, it is over the way of holiness—a way over which no unclean man can pass. Yet those who were unclean walk in it because they are unclean no longer, but have become holy men and women.

Now do not mistake; holiness is not goodness. In the absolute sense there is none good but One, that is God; that is to say, none of us are quite untemptable. However old a Christian you are, you never get beyond the reach of temptation, and many a horse has fallen at the foot of the hill.

Holiness is not sinlessness, a sinner can never be sinless. Do you doubt that? Think of it—you will

always be a sinner, you will be "a sinner saved by grace" but a sinner. Your record clings to you, and the song in heaven will be that you are washed from your sins in Christ's blood, but the sins are in your record, and to think that you have been saved from this or that will be part of the glory. Simply because you are a sinner, you will have a song to sing that the angels know nothing about,

> A sinner all my earthly days,
> A sinner who believes and prays,
> A sinner all whose evil ways
> Are left, for his dear Saviour.

If you say you are not a sinner you deceive yourself, and sometimes you may deceive simple people; but you do not deceive the rest of us, because we know you are talking nonsense.

Holiness is not innocence. As there is only One good, that is God; only one Man who has been sinless, that is Jesus; so there is only one man who has been innocent for awhile, that was Adam. To be innocent is not to be holy; to shut your eyes and not know the evil of the world is not holiness; to keep the knowledge of the evil from those you love is not to make them holy.

Holiness is knowing the good and the evil and choosing the good; holiness is that the division in my nature, part of it going one way and part of it another, has ceased, and I become whole. The word "whole" is at the root of the word "holy"; I become an integer, a whole man, and then, yielding myself up wholly to God, there is a new beginning;

my whole nature is in captivity to the law of Christ; the conflict within is ended. Holiness, therefore, is wholeness.

As to righteousness—happily we are not left without a definition. In this very chapter, in the sixth verse, we read, concerning Zacharias and Elizabeth, "they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless." That is righteousness. You keep the commandments, you walk in them, blameless, you do what God tells you; that is righteousness, and it is a great quality. Our Lord himself was righteous; because of that he gave himself, "the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God," and God is the righteous God. But righteousness by itself is a hard quality. A man may be righteous and yet unfeeling, he may be righteous or seeking to be righteous and yet be unloving, and you cannot give the neighbor all that you ought to give him merely by keeping the commandments and being strict in observing all the letter of the law. The hard, honest man is the man that is hardly honest. You may keep to the letter of the law and yet just miss the finest things. Righteousness is, nevertheless, a great quality, and it is to be greatly desired. And if we have one simple word for holiness—wholeness, then the word for righteousness is straightness.

We are to be whole and straight. Whole, one person, absolutely concentrated and consecrated, and straight, with no kink or crookedness. If we name the name of the Lord, we must be free from all in-

iquity, in-equity, anything that is not straight. Christ gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, from all crookedness; that he might purify us unto himself, "a peculiar people, zealous of good works." "Peculiar," not "odd." If you are Christ's you will have to dare to be singular, but you need not desire to be different from other people. Only be whole and be straight.

Now we have settled that these are two qualities and not one, both to be desired but very different the one from the other. That is the first thing.

II. The second thing is that *a man may be righteous and not holy.* You agree with that. Why, you know worldly men, men with high principles, who have the by-product of Christianity without confessing Christ; men who receive the benefits of a Christian civilization and a Christian atmosphere, and not knowing how much of it they owe to Christ, deride the faith that brings it to them. They say, "Never mind your religion, never mind God; our creed is to 'be just and fear not,'" which is just about as sensible as a man saying, "Never mind your breathing as long as you stand upright." Well, you may be upright for a while if you do not breathe, but not for long. You may be righteous and not holy. There are people who do not join the church, will not associate with Christian people, because, they say, they are a good deal better than some of the people who do join it. The worst of that is that it is true. There are people in the world today who, in their moral character and in their uprightness of behavior, are really better than many of us who have the ex-

perience of the grace of God, better than some people who make a great profession. But that is not the end of the story. They would be a great deal better if they were not so censorious, and I should like to say to them that they would reach the best in their righteousness if they also had holiness. Then for the righteousness of the twilight they would receive the righteousness of the day.

There are other people who have a little holiness, and yet they put the chief emphasis on righteousness. They are righteous and scarcely holy; are born again, yet, having begun in the Spirit, they try to be made perfect by the flesh. You know it, because you did it yourself, and if you are not doing it today, it is grace that has lifted you to your present position. I believe that everybody who has received the life of Christ becomes at some time a backslider in thought; that, having begun in grace, we attempt to be perfected by our own force of character and strength of will. Now thank God for a fixed will, but if you think that by your own action you can attain to perfection you are mistaken. You have to begin in Christ and go on in Christ. But the people to whom I refer fix their thought, not on living in the power of the Spirit, but on keeping the commandments of God. They put themselves under the law, and that is bondage, bondage whenever and wherever it comes; they keep the commandments, not because they want to keep them, but because it is right, and therefore they must do it; their whole thought is strict righteousness; they want to do right, and seek to act according to their idea of law

irrespective of the inconvenience it may bring to others, unsoftened by the kindly concern born of the love of God. It is possible, then, for a man to be righteous and not to be, or scarcely to be, holy. I do not think that any one will be inclined to raise any question about that.

III. But there will be some questioning about the third thing when I say *that it is possible to be holy and not righteous.* At the first blush you do not believe that, but it is true, and it is one of the great things we have to remember. There are people who get blessed, and yet they have not faced up to the fact that there are two sides to the Christian life; they come into touch with what is real holiness, but they do not come into any effective touch with what is real righteousness. They fixed their thought on the experience rather than on the practise. They are given to introspection rather than to outlook upon God's law and Christ's word.

Just as the practical man, of whom we spoke, tries to live straight but is not often found in the prayer-meeting and does not often read his Bible, the other man is always at the prayer-meeting, and reads his Bible constantly, gets up in the morning to do it, which is an excellent thing, but forgets that there is the practical living during the day; indeed, there are some of us who may begin to think that, after all, these other paths of righteousness are so unimportant in the light of the great experience and splendid emotions that they scarcely need attention at all, forgetful that holiness is morality on its highest plane. Let us realize that there is a righteousness of life

that is required of us as well as a holiness of life; that we are not only to be in touch with God in our experience, but we are to be in such touch with men as to bring honor to Christ by our actions. That we must not sing, "Take time to be holy," and then go out and take time to gossip away our neighbor's reputation; not feel the sweep of God's Spirit, and then forget to pay our subscriptions.

The tendency of the critical spirit is to say that the holiness of such people is a sham because their righteousness is so immature, but that is not true. Their holiness is real, their touch with God is real, but either their conscience has not yet been awakened or else their intelligence has not yet been reached.

Donald Hankey, in his book, *The Lord of All Good Life,* wrote words so pertinent to what I am saying that I will venture to quote them.

> Morality is the result of holiness, but it is not holiness, and may exist without holiness. Mere morality is negative, holiness is positive; morality is ice, holiness is fire; morality is conventional, holiness is beautiful; morality is self-satisfied, holiness is humble and aspiring; morality is of the world, holiness is in the world, but of heaven; morality can be reached, holiness is infinite and eternal; morality is not doing wrong, holiness is trying to be good; morality is governed by reason, holiness by love.

That is the word of "The Student in Arms," and it puts the thing very thoroughly, though perhaps you will not agree with every sentence. I venture to bring to your attention this also, the prayer of another man:

Grant us the will to fashion as we feel,
  Grant us the strength to labor as we know,
Grant us the purpose, ribbed and edged with steel,
  To strike the blow.

Knowledge we ask not—knowledge thou hast lent,
  But, Lord, the will—there lies our bitter need;
Give us to build above the deep intent
  The deed, the deed.

Add your righteousness to your holiness.

Let us take an illustration or two. I suppose there never was a more flaming herald of Christ than George Whitefield; all would say, remembering his character, his service and the result of it, that he was a saint, and yet George Whitefield kept slaves, and he devoted the profit on his slaves to the extension of the gospel. Now he was a holy man, but in that thing he was not righteous, was he? He lived in the time when the conscience of the community was not instructed as our conscience is.

Finney tells us of a publican who was converted, and he then began to hold prayer-meetings in his bar. I think that if a publican got converted in these days he would have no bar. Well, that is the difference, you see.

It is even said that in the olden days Cornish people used to have prayer-meetings, when their souls were swept by the power of God, and yet if there was a ship in distress they would light fires to lure it on to the rocks, and thank God for the benefit the wreck brought to them. I venture to say they were holy but not righteous; and I venture to say that our children will look at some things we

are doing and they will wonder how, having thought of holiness, we could allow in our own lives and the life of the community things they will utterly condemn.

If you will allow me I will tell you a broader story. There was a man who came into a little Methodist meeting and was converted on the spot. It is possible to be converted on the spot, it is possible for a man to come into a meeting a bad man and go out a good man. I know it because I have seen it in hundreds of cases. Very well, this man was, as the Salvation Army would say, "nicely saved." He came to the prayer-meetings, but the others were surprised and scandalized, for he was a poacher, and he kept on with his poaching. They could not understand it; it was too big a problem for them, so they waited until a superintendent came amongst them, and they turned the awkward job of expostulation over to him. This is a real man, they said; he prays, and we do not want to wound or offend him, and we do not know what to do. So the minister tried to get at the thing gently and said, "Well, I hear you have been converted." The man replied, "Oh! yes, sir." "And you have been a poacher, you used to catch rabbits?" "Oh! yes, sir, and I catch 'em now, and since I've been converted, they do run into the nets now." He was not a bit ashamed of it, he did not know it was wrong, the ethic of the matter had never occurred to him; but when he saw it was wrong, then he cut it off at once, and became in that respect righteous as well as holy.

That, too, is how we must act; we must let our

religion come into practical life, not let it only be a few days of rhapsody with an overwhelming flow of emotion, but a practical revision of life, taking everything to the touchstone of God's demand, making our holiness practical in righteousness of life and conduct. "In many ways," said Gladstone, "some of them great, and some of them little, but all of them subtle, we are daily tempted to allow our religion to spoil our morality"—a saying worthy of remembrance. Having the holiness they miss the righteousness. But if you are inclined to flaunt the lesser ideals of some Christian people in their faces, please remember that they possibly possess that which you altogether lack, even if they lack that which you partly possess.

IV. So we come to the fourth thing, that *both these qualities are necessary.* In the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel you will find that our Lord says in one place, in that wonderful prayer, addressing his Father, "O righteous Father," and in another place, "O holy Father." Our Father is both righteous and holy, true and righteous altogether; so holy that the angels veil their faces in his presence, so righteous that he went to the Cross rather than condone sin. We want to be like God. He who says, "Be ye holy as I am holy," also tells us that if our righteousness does not exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees we shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of God.

Twice in the New Testament these two words occur in collocation. In the sixth chapter of the Romans, the nineteenth verse, we read: "I speak

after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh; for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness." It does not much matter what order you put the two things in as long as you get them both—righteousness and holiness. In Ephesians 4: 24, " Having been renewed in the spirit of your mind," that is, in your temper, " ye put on the new man which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness "—again righteousness and holiness; holiness and righteousness but the two unfailingly together.

The righteousness will keep your holiness from being flabby, and the holiness will keep your righteousness from being hard. You will become a " perfect man in Jesus Christ," having both these virtues, both gifts of God. The righteousness is not our righteousness, but the righteousness which is by faith in Christ Jesus, a righteousness first imputed to us and then imparted, and imparted because it is imputed. Those of you who teach children or train your own, know perfectly well that the way to evoke a quality in your children is to give them credit for it. Tell a child he is courageous, and he will be courageous. God acts on that principle: he imputes righteousness to us, and he makes us righteous because we are going to be righteous. It is one of the paradoxes of the holy Gospel we profess.

In Chartist times, before the introduction of factories, people often worked in little hovels for a mere pittance. There was a Christian man in Kettering,

who worked his stocking frames in a little lean-to behind a grocer's shop. He was clamant for food, not earning enough to buy sufficient for his wife and family. Each morning he came, a hungry man, and walked down between piles of the food his nature craved. They noticed that he walked with clenched fists, muttering to himself, and they thought he was one of the dangerous Chartists. But as they listened and watched, by-and-by they heard what he was saying. Here he was, with his ill-nourished body, almost touching the things he might so easily have attempted to steal, and he kept saying the words that are at the end of the Twenty-fifth Psalm, "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me." Why, that is the Old Testament form of holiness and righteousness. Integrity is holiness, uprightness is righteousness. Both phrases may be interpreted "to be whole" and "to be straight." Integrity and uprightness preserved him. May they also preserve you and me!

Tauler, in Strassburg, preached a lifeless religion of righteousness, with no amendment of life among his people, just as Chalmers in Scotland did, but when God met with him through the word of a wandering friar, he went into retirement and got to know what holiness meant. When he reappeared, he preached with such power that people were convicted, and led to holy and righteous living. A man wrote to him one day:

> Sir, I beg of you, for God's sake, to preach a sermon showing us how a man may attain to the highest and utmost point it is given to reach in the present time.

And Tauler preached a sermon with twenty-four heads, telling the bewildered soul the way. I fear we would get discouraged before he got half through; Zacharias will tell you how to get there, not under twenty-four, but under two heads—by holiness and righteousness, both the gift of him who is righteous and holy. He will give you the inner experience, and he will give you the power for conduct. Hudson Taylor, reading in one of those little books which some of the older people among you remember, *Christ Is All,* was gladdened by these sentences:

> The Lord Jesus received is holiness begun; the Lord Jesus cherished is holiness advancing; the Lord Jesus counted as never absent is holiness complete.

And let me say also, if we receive the Lord Jesus for our mind and conduct as well as for our heart and experience, this will be righteousness complete, too.

And it is to be all the days of our life; it is not that we are to be holy and righteous on Sunday and live anyhow on Monday, we are to be holy and righteous every day. It is not that we are to be holy one day and righteous the next, taking them turn and turn about. We are to be holy and righteous every day. Zacharias says, " the Day-spring from on high hath visited us," and we may remember that the path of the just is like the dawn, it shines more and more unto the perfect day—the day when we shall be perfectly whole and perfectly straight.

And now what is to be the end of it all? We have heard about it; we have thought about it. Oh! now let there come the great decision that we will reach

the utmost that God can give us. We have tried and we have failed, we have thought and we have hoped, but now let there be such a yielding of our life to Christ that you and I may be whole and straight, that our vain repentances may be forgiven, that we will resolutely walk along God's way, not sinning and repenting, not failing and resolving, not fearing and hoping, but mourning our past one-sidedness and failure, we may each, seeking a balanced life, pray:

> Shall it be ever thus, O Lord?
> Wilt thou not work this hour in me
> The grace thy passion merited,
> Hatred of self, and love of thee?

And then all the days of our life in holiness and righteousness, we shall walk before him until we see him face to face.

XIX

PRAYER, A VITAL FORCE

Prayer also shall be made for him.—*Psalm 72: 15.*

The disputed question as to the authorship of this Psalm may perhaps best be settled by supposing that David first spoke the sentiments contained in it, and that thereafter Solomon cast it into poetic form. But a grander figure than either Solomon or David emerges as we read, for here we discover David's greater Son, who is arrayed in more splendor than even Solomon in all his glory. It is he who continues to live, his name it is that shall endure for ever, the Kingdom is his Kingdom, it is his glory that shall fill all the earth, no other, and in him, and only in him, shall all the families of the earth be blessed. The prayers of David could not have been ended unless they had found their resting-place in Christ, and it is evermore one of the marks of his reign that "prayer also shall be for him continually, and daily shall he be praised."

When so many are questioning the efficacy of prayer, and many who would still give it a place are inclined to look upon it but as a pious exercise, it is increasingly necessary to emphasize the fact that prayer really avails to receive blessing from the hand of God. With this text as a guide, we shall see that prayer is a vital force in the Kingdom of Christ, that

the sort of prayer here mentioned proves, illustrates, and justifies this statement, and that of all prayer this kind of prayer is the highest and the best.

I. Prayer Is a Vital Force in the Kingdom of Christ

God has ordained it. In this prophecy of the King's reign, prayer has at least an equal place with gold in the inauguration and continuance of his sway. "To him shall be given of the gold of Sheba" is no more certain than that "prayer also shall be made for him continually," and it is significant that prayer stands side by side with praise. It is no accident or afterthought brought in to mitigate the original plan; the fact that it is in the prophecy shows it is part of the plan.

In this scientific age, when we are realizing in such a high degree the splendor of God's creation and the inflexibility of the laws by which it is governed, the question often rises whether it is any use to pray. The Engineer of the Universe, it is argued, is so great that it is an insult to give him advice; his works are so stupendous that he can have no inclination or purpose to turn aside to every one who has some special need unsatisfied by the ordinary working of his law. The majesty of God as manifested in the things he has made seems to make prayer almost an impertinence, and we are told that our place is to bow before God's law and be still.

Perhaps if we knew God better we should find that he is greater than anything Nature can teach us. What if prayer be one of his laws? Part of the

fixed order? What if it be a thing not having its origin in the creature, but in the Creator? not introduced into the cosmos but a part of it, even from the beginning? If we came to a clear understanding of things we might discover that amid all the other forces by which God manifests his thought, prayer itself is a force, not a something to oppose or alter other laws, but itself a law working in perfect harmony with all else that God ordains. In this view of it, so far from prayer being an attempt to frustrate the purpose of God, it is seen to be a part of the purpose; it has its place in the prophecy and in the actual evolution of things.

It is therefore necessary. Those who insist that prayer is useless—and alas! the number who act out such a creed is legion—are accustomed to argue in this fashion, if they argue at all; they say that God is either interested in us or not interested. If he is not concerned about us then prayer is useless, for he will not answer it. If he is concerned, it is equally useless, for he will give what is good whether we ask him or not. This logic is very specious, it makes an end of the matter, and it would be unanswerable if the only object in God's mind were the working out of things, if he only dealt with insensate creatures.

But there are men to be considered, men who may become men indeed, men who have their will, and who may be joined to God for ever, or for ever seek to live apart from him. God's purpose, in Christ Jesus, is to bind them to himself, and evermore encourage in them the spirit of children. This he can-

not accomplish without prayer. His best gifts cannot be ours unless we ask for them. We may need them above everything, we may yearn that they should be ours, but because of what he is, and because of what we are, the things that are most worth the having cannot be given for our enjoyment without prayer.

We can imagine a case, even among ourselves, where there may be the utmost willingness on one side to bestow, and an urgent desire on the other side to possess, and yet without a prayer there could be neither bestowal nor possession; when to give without a prayer would be to mar the gift, to wrong the giver, and to injure the recipient. Suppose a woman's heart to be won by an ardent lover, one who loves truly, who is desirous above all things that she should be his, but who yet is chary of his words. On her side she is willing and eager to give herself to the man who has conquered her; on his side he eagerly awaits the day when his love shall be crowned. *But unless he asks he will never have.* It is not enough for him to say, "If she is good, and if she love me, she will do everything even without being asked." The fact is that, unless she is asked, she positively cannot give her maiden love with all the beautiful bloom upon it. There must be a prayer. She might, without a prayer, give something else, but she absolutely cannot give *that.* She may indeed, in delicate ways known only to women, lead her lover to understand that if he ask she will not refuse, but for his sake as well as her own, for the sake of present respect and of future happiness, he must ask

or else he will never receive. The sweet and beautiful gift can only be his by prayer. If this be conceivably true between two of God's creatures, why should it be called inconceivable as between God and men?

Now I do not put this case forward as an illustration of the relationship between men and God, but only of the fact that, even in view of the greatest beneficence, there may be occasion for prayer. The relationship of the believer to God is that of a child to the Father; and this of itself is an argument for prayer, for no benevolent father will wish his child merely to take what the general routine of the home provides, without at any time expressing a desire or a preference. Concerning the man who has not yet come to full assurance on the matter, Charles Kingsley well says "that those two words, 'Our Father,' if he can really believe them in their richness and depth, will make his doubts vanish in a moment, and prayer seem the most natural and reasonable of all acts." Because God is the Father of those who have faith in Jesus Christ he desires intercourse with them, he intends to educate them by bringing them into direct contact with himself, and therefore he has determined that the choice gifts of his love can only be given to those who ask: prayer is not only an ordained force for the progress of the Kingdom, it is absolutely necessary to the fulfilment of God's highest plans.

Moreover it is effective. Blessings are actually given in answer to the cry of God's children. Prayer is not only a pious exercise that makes the man who

offers it better, it really gains gifts of God. The reflex blessing of prayer on the human heart is as nothing in comparison with its practical results. It is, in itself, a prophecy of the coming boon. When we see that it is part of the plan we can understand that it is like the shadow coming before the approaching gift, God being behind both. It is effective, it is followed by results, and in a very real sense produces them.

We ourselves are witnesses. There are many who hear me who have proved that God answers prayer. I myself remember the first time I touched God and received what I asked; it was an insignificant thing, but the answer was not insignificant. We cannot give mathematical proof of this, those who will not believe without that must for ever remain unbelievers. But no such proof should be expected, for the God and Father to whom we pray is unseen, and the hand that gives the gift is hidden. Yet we are sure that our prayers prevail. If a daughter asks of her father a gift, and presently finds it on her dressing-table, is she wrong in thinking that her father caused it to be put there? If a son asks a boon, and in a week's time discovers it on his desk, is he not entitled to argue that it is his father's answer? Neither daughter nor son saw the father purchase the thing nor put it where they found it: they have no *mathematical* proof that it is their father's doing, but they are quite certain of the fact, and unhesitatingly they thank their father for his goodness. You say, perhaps after all they may be mistaken, it may have been merely a coincidence, or

somebody else may have overheard the request and may have fulfilled it. But if the process is repeated many times, by different members of the family under varying circumstances, and answers come to all, is it possible for them to be mistaken? Lifting the argument up into the family of God, where such coincidences have been multiplied a million times, we know and are persuaded that God actually does give gifts in direct response to the petitions of faithful souls.

We ourselves have put the matter to the test. Many a time we have prayed, and the answer has come with such lightning speed that we have been moved to pray and pray again. We have been tempted to say, "It is wonderful," though faith has instantly rebuked us in view of the promises of God. In very truth,

> God answers sharp and sudden on some prayers,
> And thrusts the thing we asked for, in our faces—
> A gauntlet with a gift in 't,

challenging us to ask more. And if at times we have been kept waiting we can still, in the delayed answer, trace the effect to the cause, and glorify him whose ear is not heavy that it cannot hear, and whose arm is not shortened that it cannot save.

We are sure that prayer prevails indeed in spite of the fact that some of our requests are refused. Prayer is none the less effective because our Father in his wisdom does not give everything his children demand. Much depends on who prays and on what is asked: God is good at all times,

Good when he gives, supremely good,
Nor less when he denies;
E'en crosses from his sovereign hand,
Are blessings in disguise.

Years ago a member of the church of which I was minister, one of the godly band of women serving in the Bible and Domestic Mission in Leicester, had as part of her duty to visit the Infirmary with flowers from the Flower Mission. It was not her business to speak to the patients about Christ, but she was so full of love to him that she could not refrain. And she bore her testimony not only to the patients but to the nurses and doctors. She was preeminently a woman of prayer, and one day some of the young doctors, meeting her in one of the wards, thought they would have some merriment at her expense. One of them shut the door, and putting his back to it said:

"You are always telling us that God answers prayer?"

"Yes, sir," she answered, "I am sure my Father hears his children when they call."

"Well," he said, "I am very hard up just now. Do you think if I asked God for a five-pound note he would give it to me?"

That was a poser. How would you have replied? She answered after the Socratic method, which, as you know, is to answer an awkward question by asking a question still more awkward. So she said:

"If you were introduced to the Prince of Wales, sir, would you think it right at once to put your hand in his pocket for a five-pound note?"

"Oh no," he laughingly responded, "certainly not." He saw where she was going, but he had to follow her.

"You would need to know him better before you could ask him for it," she said, pursuing her advantage.

Some years ago I suggested an illustration on this subject, which, judging by the use that others have since made of it, seems to be appropriate. In Fleet Street, London, there is, I am told, an office of a Scottish newspaper, connected by its own direct wire with the headquarters in Edinburgh. Two reporters live on the premises, at the top of the house. On one occasion, I understand, one of them came home very late and knocked at the door, and rang, endeavoring to get in. But his companion was so soundly asleep that he could not make him hear. What was to be done? Where could he get help? It occurred to him to try whether he could not reach the sleeper by way of the head office: so he telegraphed to Edinburgh and stated his dilemma. In a little while a message was flashed over the direct wire from the office there to the sleeper in London; hearing the click of the machine he hastily rose and with astonishment read its contents, "*Open the door,*" and as his belated friend again rang the bell, he realized the position of things, and admitted him. That message to Edinburgh was not just a pious exercise, not something to keep the tired and disappointed man patient. It was effective for its purpose, it changed the situation, it gained him his desire. Effort is not to be despised, but often when

our best efforts fail, if in faith we flashed our requests to God, we should find that even the earthly purpose is best accomplished, and the hearts of men most easily moved, by way of the throne of him who has the hearts of all men in his control and whose ears are ever open to our cry.

II. The Sort of Prayer Spoken of in the Text Explains, Illustrates, and Justifies These Statements

The force of the text depends upon the preposition. We are familiar with the thought of praying *to* Christ: we know what it is to pray *through* Christ; we may even understand what it is to pray *with* Christ, for he is our great Intercessor and unites his pleas to ours; and we unite our pleas to his when we ask the Father to give him the heathen as his inheritance.

But this is something more. We are to pray *for* Christ. Do not shrink from the startling thought; surely if we may work for Christ we may pray for Christ. He lives: this prayer is the corollary of his life; it is more precious to him than the gold of Sheba, and does more for his triumph. It is, in fact, the sure forerunner of the praises which will yet throng to crown his head.

The place of the prayer depends upon the conjunction. We have said that prayer is ordained, that it is necessary, and that it is effective. Let us test the statement by this particular case. It is quite certain that Christ is to live and to prevail: it is equally certain that prayer is to be made for him. "Also," fix

the thought on that word. Now if his triumph is irrespective of our prayer, he will triumph whether we pray or not. But the same prophecy that foretells his triumph foretells our prayers, and if one is unnecessary the other may be uncertain. Perish the thought! No, the one is equally the will of God with the other. Prayer is to be the great means of bringing in the Kingdom: because Christ lives, prayer will be made: because prayer is made his Kingdom will continue to grow. He himself has taught us thus to pray: when we say to the Father, "Thy kingdom come," we are truly praying for Christ, and the prayer is necessary to the coming of the Kingdom.

III. Prayer for Christ Is the Highest Form of Prayer

For he is the highest. It is much more important that he shall prosper than you or I. He is greater. He lives, I die. He lives not for himself but for others; his prosperity will mean that abundant grace will come to others; and my prayer for him will help to hasten the day of his glory. So in praying for him I am actually praying for all his people. Surely such prayer is the highest. Indeed, the Lord taught us this when he told his disciples to pray on behalf of the Name, and the Kingdom, and the Will, before they asked even for daily bread. He put first things first.

Such prayer leads us away from self. Even our prayers may increase our selfishness, if we always pray for only ourselves, and our own circle. The practise of prayer for Christ saves us from this.

It delivers us too from the subtle temptation which assails us of being interested only in the little bit of work which immediately surrounds us, and it continually reminds us that all his work is his. It widens our sympathies, and lifts us away from sectarianism: if blessing comes on any church we are glad, since we have been praying for him, and his are all the churches.

Such prayer causes us to identify ourselves with Christ. As we pray all our hopes become centered in Christ, and he makes us sharers in his compassion for men. Our greatest grief is when he is dishonored, our highest joy when he is glorified. We take an intelligent interest in the progress of his kingdom, we pray for laborers to be thrust forth into the harvest, we remember them when they go; we pray for conversions, for the church, for the glorious Epiphany of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. We are on the look-out for answers. Our lives become devoted to the cause that demands our petitions. We cease to hinder by our conduct what we seek to further by our prayer. We feel that Christ's things are ours, more truly ours than the things we once thought of as our own.

Such prayer is the surest way to all blessing. If our prayer *for* Christ be answered many of our prayers addressed *to* him will be answered, and many of our prayers for ourselves will cease to be offered as we come into fuller conformity to his mind. His triumph will fulfil many of our desires, and to be recompensed by his presence will be more to us than all the things we shall have been denied.

Therefore let us pray, let us pray without ceasing, let us chiefly pray for Christ and his kingdom—all other things will be added: let us put in motion this effective force, for more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. So will the kingdom come. And be assured that those who keep by Christ's side in prayer will certainly be by his side in glory.

XX

THE WATER OF THE WELL OF BETHLEHEM

And David longed, and said, Oh, that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate.—*1 Chronicles 11: 17.*

It is the little things of life that show true worth, and the unexpected events that make men famous. Though we are scarcely sure of the names of the heroes of this story, their cup of cold water has by no means lost its reward. Their noble deed instinctively appeals to the hearts of all people, and it has been the worthy subject of many poems. But though the king and his noble three alike shine in the luster of the incident, yet hitherto the essence of the story seems to me to have been strangely missed.

David and his handful of followers were in Adullam. The Philistines had pitched in Rephaim with a wing at Bethlehem that barred the way to the King's native place. He longed for a draught of the water from the familiar well—a well that may still be seen by travelers. The three agreed to break through the enemy's lines, and bring him what he wanted. In the night they succeeded in reaching the well, themselves took a long draught of the water, and again passing through the host of the Philistines they were back in the early morning, bearing with them the precious gift for which they had jeoparded their

lives. The King esteemed the gift too precious for him to drink, and poured it out as an oblation to the Lord.

This is the idyl of Adullam. But we cannot help wondering whether it would not have been a worthier reward for the reckless bravery of the three mighty men if the King had drunk the water they brought to him at the risk of their lives; whether they were not disappointed that after such a venture there should be such a waste; whether they were content that the King's thirst should remain unsatisfied. The answer usually given is that he most showed his appreciation of the deed in refusing to benefit by it. But if we apply the same rule to that other gift which once came to the world at Bethlehem, we shall see the fallacy of the argument. Does a man most worthily esteem God's Christmas Gift to the world, most truly honor the sacrifice of Christ, by rejecting it? Ten thousand times, No. When Christ brings us of the water of the Well of Bethlehem we must, if we prize it, drink and live. That is the only fitting sequel.

Why, then, was it otherwise in the case of David? There are three things underlying the story:

I. The Half-Conscious Desire of a Despondent Human Soul

Adullam is generally spoken of as a desert void of water. If that were the fact, David's desire for the water of Bethlehem could be easily accounted for. But in reality there is a spring there from which David and his men were doubtless accustomed to

draw the water they needed. David was too good a general to shut himself and his people up in a place where they would have been cut off from one of the chief necessaries of life. When, therefore, he longed for a draught of the water of the well of Bethlehem, it was not because he was thirsty, it was because the water was "of Bethlehem." All the associations of the place seemed to him to be focused and condensed into that water, just as sometimes with ourselves a taste, or oftener an odor, will recall a whole world of circumstance that once was connected with it. The associations of that well had made the water sweet to the king, he vainly imagined that the water, could he get it, would still be sweet though the old days had passed for ever. We can suppose that dimly conscious in his heart there were four things concentrated into that desire:

The recollection of infancy. He would think of the occasions when with his mother he had come to the well, where with awe and with fear, yet with strange joy and rapture, he had first looked forth on the world with all its glamor and enticement. For the well was *by the gate.* So today men who are weary of the battle of life long for childhood's days, for the time when heaven lay about them in their infancy, when trust and innocence first met hope and desire. They do well, for those days were near heaven, and the thought of our youth should beckon us back to God. At the time they did not seem precious, we longed to get away from their restraints and limitations, but afterwards the early years have around them a halo of sanctity; we think of them

as sacred; the mother's portrait, or the father's letter sets us longing

> For the touch of a vanished hand,
> And the sound of a voice that is still.

Like David we may say some other thing, we may ask for the material sign, but what we actually want is the thing of which it is only a symbol.

The memory of home. If the well was at the gate going out from the place of birth, it was equally at the gate coming in. After tending the flocks on the hillside, or returning dusty and jaded from a journey, David remembered how grateful it had been to come to the well, the journey and the toil over, home in sight, and the water bubbling a welcome. When he called for the water from the well by the gate he really wanted to be home again, to have the same sense of the task accomplished, and love's welcome sure, as when he came up to the well and sat there a moment on his way home. Let us all make our homes so beautiful that whatever befalls our children, wheresoever they roam, their hearts untraveled may still return to the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate, that there may be at least one spot on earth sacred and unsullied, a miniature heaven of peace amidst the fret of man; that they may feel on the thought of it what a great writer once wrote when he set his face toward his own land. "Home! Home!! Home!!! Home!!!! Home!!!!!"

The desire for peace. The well had been the gathering-place of the village in the dusk of the evening, there they had all come, those people, as the calm of

night descended on the earth. To think of it was to recall the gentle zephyrs, the loving words, the bright eyes, the adieus so filled with joyful sadness and with somber joy, the partings that were such sweet sorrow, that they could say good-by until tomorrow. In contrast with all that, David was now an outlaw fighting for his life, a fugitive without a companion. Little wonder that he craved for the halcyon days behind him. Many another man carving his way to fame and living large in the world's eye has yearned for the simple pleasures of his early manhood with great desire, nor is the desire ignoble.

The hope of victory. They say that in this soliloquy David forgot for the moment that the Philistines were near. Not he. It was because he could not get the water of Bethlehem that he wanted it, the things out of our reach are always the most prized. What we count common when it lies in abundance at our feet is glorified when it is beyond us. God has so made us that we must ever press on to some good we have not yet attained. This is the spirit of the warrior. David meant to have that well, all the cause of Israel was fixed upon it, he could not be content while the Philistines shut him off from it. To him there appeared no way to it but by combat, it was only to be obtained at the price of victory, so when he sighed, " Oh for the well of Bethlehem! " whether he was quite conscious of it or not, he was sighing for the conquest of his foes.

This is as true to the spiritual life as to nature. When Job cried, " Oh, that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me, when his

candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness!" he was sighing for the water of the Well of Bethlehem. When the saint remembers the days of his espousal and longs for the fervency of his first love he is crying for the water of the Well of Bethlehem. It is even possible for the body to join the soul in this great desire until we can say truly, "My heart and *my flesh* crieth out for the living God." We may not always phrase correctly what we mean; you may ask for a drink of water when your heart is aching for you know not what. "Water! water!" the cry of the wounded on life's battle-field has a deeper utterance from the souls than from the bodies of men. Childhood and home, and peace, and victory, are all in the cry: all we know of good and all the longing for good we do not know rises in the appeal which human thought and longing fails fully to utter. "Oh that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem!" Thank God there is one Well that has its spring at Bethlehem, whose waters will do more for us than all we can desire.

So we see that in this cry there was a dim consciousness of a deeper need. In the deed it prompted we may discern

II. The Half-Understood Response of Devoted Human Hearts

These three men tried to meet the king's wish. They did not bring some water from the spring near at hand, as if that would do as well, they did not argue that there could be no real difference, and that

David would never know. They did not try to get somebody else to bring the Bethlehem water. They did not spend time in vapid and useless condolences. They did not wait an actual command, the king's wish was enough for them. They agreed to do the deed. It is easy enough for three men to agree *not* to do, especially if they imagine that they have only a third of a conscience each, but these three Endeavorers of the olden times discussed the matter but briefly, they were eager for action. So we for men in their need, or better yet for men in Christ's name, should stand ready to volunteer.

They faced the Philistines. It was a great deed to do for a very little thing. They might have argued that David could do very well without it, that certainly it was not worth the hazard of their lives. They went with only a chance of getting what they sought, but their bravery made them willing to risk all on that chance. Unnoticed they slipped from the camp, they had no cheer to inspire them: if they failed they would be scarcely missed, or if missed they would be blamed. The odds were much against them, but devotion does not count its obstacles; they would dare all for David.

They brought the water. Creeping through their foes they reached the well, and filled the urn with scarce a splash: back with their precious burden, now in greater danger they came, until, oh joy! they were safe, and here was the unspilled water for their king. But David wanted more than the water, he wanted *the well* and *the gate;* they could not bring him those. The sick man craves to change his room;

he really wants to be rid of his fever. The dissatisfied man craves new surroundings; he really wants rest of heart. Men socially ask for political remedies, and at length get impatient of all remedies (free trade and reform bills having done so little for them), they want God, and they do not yet know it. They cry out for water; that can only meet the need that is physical, while it is the spiritual that is crying out within them. They ask water which would fail them, they need something that will abide. Ruskin tells of a Swiss peasant drinking at a mountain stream to whom he said in passing, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again." The peasant bared his head, and beautifully replied, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." Often when men ask for that they mean this. Language, while it half reveals, also half-conceals the soul within. Let us ever seek to offer men what they desire rather than what they demand, to lead them from the base to the beautiful, from the transient to the eternal, from the things of earth to the things of Christ, for which, though they know it not, their hearts are athirst. These three mighty men brought David the supply of his need, but they did not bring it in their urn.

They did more than they knew. They thought he wanted only water, they thought they brought him only water; but they brought him love and life and devotion. The water there and thus was a sign of these, the hidden gift all the greater because it was so unconsciously revealed. David thought, if he thought of anything beyond the water, that he

wanted peace, and home and boyhood: here was something better, something nobler. Having this it would be base to dream of going back to the former things—they had passed away. The brave deed opened up a vista of higher things. The thought that prompted the deed shone through, and the loyalty of these brave hearts was like cold water to a thirsty soul.

Let us who desire to help men learn that the deed of love, however blundering, will show the love, and therefore, for Christ's sake, and in spite of all our imperfections, let us haste to perform it; and let those who yearn for the things of yore be assured that no dreams of the past, however glowing, are comparable to the love of today.

> Nothing is true but love, nor any worth,
> Love is the fragrance that doth sweeten earth.

He asked water, they brought him that which was better than their blood. When he was assured of their love he was at the gate of all other good, for the love of earth is the avenue that leads to the understanding of the love of God.

In the story we see yet another thing—

III. The Half-Revealed Offering of the Grateful Human Life

As David had risen from the thought of the mere draught of water to the revelation of the love that lay in the deed, he would go still higher, even to God. If he was first a man in his physical need, then a king in the homage he inspired, he would be a wor-

shiper, and give as much to his King as the three mighty men gave to theirs—even life itself.

The symbol was no longer needed. The way to wean men from the earth and its vanities is to show them something better. Even bodily thirst can be swallowed up in divine emotion. Some Arctic travelers, long shut in the polar ice and rescued when all hope had been abandoned, were asked by their discoverers whether they had suffered much from hunger during the weary months. The answer was significant and pathetic. "Hunger was forgotten in the thought that they were deserted." The mental pain had stilled the bodily appetite. If hunger may be forgotten in desertion, thirst may be forgotten in devotion. The soul of David rising to his Lord mastered the body with its longings for the water of the well of Bethlehem. He would not drink it, for he did not want it. New desires had arisen within him. He thirsted for God, even the living God, so greatly, that he forgot all else. As water, that water was no longer needed.

But it was used as a symbol still. He sacrificed all that it meant. The real offering he gave to God that day was not the water of Bethlehem, but what it had represented. To him, ambition, peace, home, and all the past, to them, devotion, courage, love, life. In pouring out the water he poured out these precious things on the altar of the earth. Long afterward the apostle Paul, whose life was all one oblation, put into words what David put into action, "Yea, and if I be offered on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." So we come

to the secret of high living, which is to hold all in God, and to pour out all in lavish devotion to God. We may give what David gave though no dramatic features may accompany our sacrifice. Day by day, unknown even to our most intimate friends, we may yield up all our hopes and plans to him who deserves more than all, to him in whom alone any worthy purpose can be adequately fulfilled. We may render to him more absolute devotion than ever soldier gave to captain, or slave to despot. We may so love our God that even the best gifts of his love may be contemned because of the rapture of his presence.

> For glee of God, knowing no wish nor will,
> World-heedless. Whatever vintage fill
> Earth's jeweled cup, the Cup-Bearer so splendid
> That all for very ecstacy his wine we spill.

So God took the place of men. Their action was more worthy of being done to God than to man, hence David said, "Shall *I* drink of the blood of these men?" He confessed that he was unworthy of such loyalty, the nobility of it humbled him. Nothing brings a man down like a mighty action of love done toward him. That is the way God humbles us. He gives us his best, even his Well-Beloved. The devotion of this deed to David made him devote it to God. They who brought it said it was Bethlehem water, he said it was the blood of his warriors. There is a deeper vision that can see beneath the surface and in common things recognize the highest nobility. Some only see the "caller herrin": others "Ca' them lives o' men." Some see but the bush in

the wilderness, others behold God there and are glad.

It was not the mere water that David offered to God. That had become of no value in comparison with the holy homages evoked by it. These were the true oblation; the water from the well but showed them forth as David put it to its holiest use,

> And lifting up his hands in solemn prayer,
> As though he stood a priest before the shrine,
> He poured it on the earth before the Lord.
> "Far be it from me, God, that I should drink,
> For slave of selfish lust, forgetting thee,
> Forgetting these my brothers."

And I trow these brothers of his, who had been devoted to him in his human desire, were the more devoted to him when he rose above it.

Thus arises the vision of a greater sacrifice. Men everywhere have the great yearning of heart that must for ever be unsatisfied until they have drunk of the water of life. The words of this story are familiar to us. Bethlehem! blood! water! They recall a story far more thrilling, of sacrifice far more splendid: they speak of the life taken and the life given up that it might be taken again: of the Child born, and of "the water and the blood from thy riven side which flowed." O thou Immanuel, let them be to us of sin the double cure!

As Christmas comes upon us we instinctively think of the Christ of Bethlehem, and of the body he there took for our redemption. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through

death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." He came breaking through the hosts at Bethlehem, there he was at the gate and at the well, that to us he might bring that water of Bethlehem, which shall be in us a well of living water springing up to everlasting life.

Outside the gate he suffered on the green hill far away. Thus he brought us the water of the well. To you, to me it is offered—childlikeness, home, peace, victory, devotion, love, life; what more could he do for us? Take the gift he brings you, even eternal life, take it as the one satisfaction for this world and the next: but use it not for yourself alone, pour it out on the altar of your heart for God and for others, and thus be a follower of these mighty men and of him who is mightier than the mightiest.

So by heaven's gate I see pure waters streaming,
And faint and weary, long to drink of them;
For that blest fountain, clear as crystal seeming,
Gladly earth's broken cisterns I contemn:
I see the crimson through the crystal gleaming,
Dear water of the well of Bethlehem.

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark;

For, tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

—*Alfred, Lord Tennyson.*

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